

THE BIBLE'S
OWN ACCOUNT
OF ITSELF

E. MAITLAND

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TO
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BY

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THE BIBLE'S OWN
ACCOUNT OF ITSELF.

BY
EDWARD MAITLAND

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Edited by SAML. HOPGOOD HART.

"Now there come out of the darkness and the storm which shall arise upon the earth, two dragons. And they fight and tear each other, until there arises a star, a fountain of light, a queen, who is Esther."—*The Vision of Mordecai, as Interpreted in "Clothed with the Sun," I., IX.*

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Since the publication, in 1891, of "The Bible's Own Account of Itself," Edward Maitland has passed over to the other side. His withdrawal took place on the 2nd October, 1897—a little more than nine years after the death of his colleague, Dr. Anna Kingsford. He has left behind him an interesting account of his life and work in "The Life of Anna Kingsford," his last book, which was published in 1896. From this we learn that he had the "idea of a mission" early in life, and that this idea gathered force and consistency until it was made clear to him that "not destruction merely, but construction, not exposure of error but the demonstration of truth, was comprised in it." When, in January, 1874, he first met Dr. Anna Kingsford, who had a similar idea, they recognised that their mission, which they declared was derived from "the Church invisible, celestial, and incorruptible," was *a joint mission*, and that "it was summed up in the word 'interpretation.'"

Mystics have always known that the true and intended sense and meaning of all holy scripture is to

be found, not in the letter, but in a hidden interpretation to be put upon the letter. Thomas à Kempis (for example), in "The Imitation of Christ," says of Moses and the prophets: "They may indeed sound forth words, but they give not the spirit. They deliver the letter, but Thou, O Lord God, disclocest the sense. They publish mysteries, but Thou explainest the meaning of the things sealed. They cry out with words, but Thou givest understanding to the hearer." Before the publication of the writings of Dr. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, there were not any writings that disclosed the sense and explained the meaning of the "things sealed." But, thanks to Dr. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, this is not so now. When, in 1881, the time had come "for the unsealing of the world's Bibles," they knew that their "own appointed mission" was that of "unsealing the Bibles of the West." How they performed their mission, how they rescued the spirit of the Bible from a literalism that had hidden and well nigh destroyed it, is shewn in their great work, "The Perfect Way; or, The Finding of Christ," which was published in 1882. This book, which was "the very life-blood of their souls," by rightly interpreting the Bible, has restored the true, esoteric, and spiritual Christianity to the world. "The Perfect Way" should be in the hands of every student of the Divine, for it contains a Divine Revelation. It is a book to be classed with the Divine books of the world.

Already are numerous clergy of the various communions into which, for want of the key of knowledge, the Church has split, recognising the necessity of adopting the new interpretation as that alone which, by making religion intelligible and reasonable, can save it, and with it the world; and in view of the complete, inexpugnable, and absolute demonstration afforded of the spiritual nature of existence, the being of God, the soul and immortality, "no one can henceforth pose as a Materialist without convicting himself of wilful ignorance and blindness, and determined rejection of

positive fact.”(1) “To assume that Carlyle would have “persisted in his description of the Bible as ‘that Hebrew bundle of old clothes,’ *after he had read the new exposition*, would be to suppose him so firmly “fixed in his prejudices as to be inaccessible to evidence “and reason on the subject. The recovery of the “esoteric sense has completely changed the condition “of Biblical interpretation. To continue to treat “Scripture on the old lines and from the old standpoint “will, henceforth, be an act of wilful perversity.”(2) But Edward Maitland ever insisted that “in order “to have cognisance of things interior, mystic, “spiritual, men must direct their minds forcibly and “reverently to the region of the consciousness within “themselves, leading meanwhile the life which accords “with such high thought :” (3) and he pointed out that, though the results of his and Dr. Anna Kingsford’s labours were before the world and accessible to all, “they belong to a level of thought which cannot “possibly be reached or comprehended by those “who choose to assume that man is a mere shell, “material, phenomenal, hollow, and unsubstantial, “and who accordingly will not let themselves think “inwards and upwards to reality, but only outwards “and downwards to appearance :” (4) for “in order “to appreciate the solution of any problem, man must “first be conversant with the elements of that problem, “and for this he must be sensitive and vitalised in that “plane of the consciousness to which the problem is “related. The mere Materialist can no more comprehend things belonging to the spiritual plane than the “mere athlete can comprehend things belonging to “the intellectual and metaphysical plane ; but he is “not therefore justified in denying their reality.” (3)

Respecting the practice of ascribing to the Bible meanings which it expressly, emphatically and

(1)—E.M. Letter A.J., 15th September, 1894.

(2)—From M.S. dated 19th September, 1891 (endorsed “approx. from memory”), of letter written by E.M. “in reply to Saladin.”

(3)—E.M. letter A.J., 8th September, 1894.

(4)—E.M. letter A.J., 29th December, 1894.

repeatedly disavows, as by giving literal and material significations to statements obviously and declaredly mystical and spiritual, thereby converting it into gross and blasphemous nonsense, and of insisting on this as its real meaning, to the total falsification of that meaning, Edward Maitland said: "I have only to say that if such practice be not folly, ignorance and dishonesty, I know of no practice that is." (4)

In "The Life of Anna Kingsford" the following passage occurs with reference to the year 1891, and the writing of "The Bible's own account of Itself," Edward Maitland there says: "By a train of events "so exceptional as to seem to be ordered, I had been "brought into relations with a certain weekly paper "which was about the last I ever anticipated writing "in. This was the *Agnostic Journal and Eclectic "Review*, which I knew only as an organ of unbelief "in its most pronounced form, its editor avowing it to "be the object of his life utterly to discredit the Bible "and destroy all that passed for Christianity. The few "numbers I had seen of it had simply disgusted me "by the dense materialism and coarse profanity of its "writers. The editor, nevertheless, was—I was "assured—better than his paper, and his revolt was "not really against religion as such, but against "the presentation of it to the destruction of which I "myself was devoted. What if I could, in his columns, "get pure spiritual teaching to an audience otherwise "inaccessible on that side of their nature? The chief "priest and Pharisee class had proved themselves as "deaf as of old to any but the conventional orthodoxies. "Appeal to them was useless. There was no room in "the sumptuous inns of a press inveterately sacerdotal "for the humanity represented by our work. How "about the publicans and sinners of the lowly cave "and stable represented by the *Agnostic Journal*? I "was bound to get a hearing, wherever it might be "accorded, and what more likely than that the very "novelty of the attempt to convict the dominant

(4)—E.M. letter A.J., 29th December, 1894.

“ orthodoxy of heresy and falsehood out of its
 “ own sacred books, and thus to rehabilitate these,
 “ would win a hearing which would otherwise be denied?

“ Such were the conditions under which I consented
 “ to contribute to the paper in question the series of
 “ articles entitled ‘ The Bible’s Own Account of Itself,’
 “ and subsequently published under that name. I had
 “ despatched the first of the series over-night, without
 “ any particle of misgiving ; but on rising next morn-
 “ ing I found myself labouring to an extraordinary
 “ degree with apprehension at the prospect of the
 “ encounter I had challenged, feeling that I had gone
 “ into a hornet’s nest, or thrown myself, like another
 “ Daniel, into a den tenanted by far less noble creatures
 “ than lions, since, as materialists and vivisectionists,
 “ they had, most of them, so far suppressed their
 “ humanity as to be rather demon than human. Thus
 “ pondering and shrinking, I sat at the foot of my bed,
 “ when suddenly Mary (5) threw herself upon me in an
 “ all-pervading embrace, giving me an immense acces-
 “ sion of force and courage, and exclaiming in her own
 “ unmistakable accents, ‘ Caro ! (5) they who are on
 “ your side are more than they who are against you.
 “ The mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire
 “ round about you ! ’ And from that time forth, for all
 “ the years I wrote in that paper, I found myself
 “ possessed of force and lucidity amply sufficient to
 “ sustain me in every exposition and secure victory in
 “ every encounter ; and from many of its readers—
 “ some of them life-long unbelievers—I received tokens
 “ of grateful appreciation declaring that as I put
 “ spiritual things before them, they had no difficulty in
 “ accepting them.”(6)

It will be noticed that the above-mentioned communication from Dr. Anna Kingsford was *heard* by Edward Maitland. This was the first occasion, he tells us, after the death of his Colleague, on which he was able “ to catch the tone and accents of her voice.”

(5)—“ Mary ” and “ Caro ” were the initiation names given to Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland respectively. Anna Kingsford had passed over to the other side on the 22nd February, 1888. S.H.H.

(6)—Life of A.K., Vol. II. pp. 406, 407.

I have carefully compared this book with the Author's MS. which is in my possession. A few additions have been made to the text of the last edition so as to give the work complete, and I have inserted a few additional notes. I have also added, by way of Appendix, two letters, written by Edward Maitland, which have a bearing upon the subjects dealt with in this book, and these I trust will be found useful to many.

SAML. HOPGOOD HART.

CROYDON,

August, 1905.



PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

These chapters were originally written as an exposition of the Mysticism of the West, in distinction from that of the East as propounded by the Theosophical Society.

In view of a certain identity between the two systems, it is but right to state here that the work represented by these chapters, and formulated in the joint writings of the late Dr. Anna Kingsford and myself, was commenced prior to the formation of the Theosophical Society, and carried out in complete independence of its teachings. Such resemblance as occurs is due, therefore, to the correspondence originally subsisting between the religious systems of the East and the West.

E. M.

London, September, 1891.

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THE BIBLE'S OWN ACCOUNT OF ITSELF.

CHAPTER I.

FOR a mind at once candid, impartial, and duly instructed, there can be but one opinion as to the issue of the long-drawn-out controversy between orthodoxy and Agnosticism respecting the Bible. Orthodoxy has been worsted at every point, and henceforth the Bible of orthodoxy is, alike as regards its history, its science, its morality, and its religion, a discredited book; and to Agnosticism belongs the credit of having demolished what has long been a stumbling-block and an offence to the human mind and conscience, and a barrier to human progress and well-being.

But this is not to say that the Bible itself has been disposed of, but only the Bible of orthodoxy, the Bible considered as literal, historical truth. It is on this ground that Agnosticism has met, and fought, and discomfited orthodoxy; but on this ground alone. And there remains another ground and another standpoint from which to regard the Bible, which is no other than that insisted on by the Bible itself, but of which neither orthodoxy nor Agnosticism has taken the smallest account; and the consequence is that, while orthodoxy has laid itself open to the charge of having presented the Bible in a light which, not being that of the Bible, is a false light, Agnosticism has made the mistake of supposing that it has disposed of both orthodoxy and the Bible, when all it has disposed of is a presentation

of the Bible which, by inverting, distorting, or mutilating its meaning, has concealed the Bible from view. This is a mistake which—as will appear when we come to define the true standpoint of the Bible—is, singular as it may seem, due, not to any defect of perception arising out of the hostility of Agnosticism to orthodoxy, but to its participation in the very characteristic which has ever been the bane of orthodoxy, and herein to its failure to be consistent and thorough in its rejection of the methods of orthodoxy.

Now, the standpoint from which orthodoxy and Agnosticism alike have regarded the Bible, in being the literal and historical, is the materialistic standpoint; and the standpoint on which the Bible itself insists as its proper and only one is the spiritual and mystical; and this is the standpoint which, in order to be consistent and thorough in its opposition to orthodoxy, Agnosticism should have adopted. Instead of being content with attacking orthodoxy on its own ground, and assuming that its work was done when a victory had been gained there, it should have consummated its task by showing what is the true ground, and how completely orthodoxy has lost sight of it. By this means, and this only, it would have gained a crowning victory over orthodoxy. But, as above intimated, it is not in the nature of things that Agnosticism should be able to recognise this ground. For, in common with orthodoxy, Agnosticism is a mode of Materialism, and incompetent, therefore, to discern what is spiritual and mystical. "The natural," or materialistic, "man," as Paul so truly says, "knoweth not the things of the spirit, nor can receive them, because they are spiritually discerned." Hence, first, the failure of orthodoxy and Agnosticism alike to discern the true standpoint of the Bible; and, next, the mistake of Agnosticism in supposing that it had disposed of the Bible when it had disposed only of the orthodox presentation of it. The materialistic standpoint gone, there was for Agnosticism no other. This, then, is the first count in the judgment to be passed upon the controversy under consideration: that, so far from the Bible having been disposed of by the victory of Agnosticism over orthodoxy, the Bible

has not really been in question at all in the matter, but has remained as absolutely untouched by either side as if it were some totally different book that was under discussion. And all that has been in question, and which has really been disposed of, is the orthodox and literal acceptance of the Bible, which, so far from being that admitted by the Bible, is emphatically and repeatedly repudiated by it. So that both parties have set aside the Bible's own account of itself, and substituted an account which the Bible expressly disclaims, and contended alone over this, leaving the Bible still to be interpreted, still to have justice done to it, still to have its proper place and function determined. And so inadequate have been the methods employed in its elucidation, whether for attack or for defence, that neither side has endeavoured to ascertain either the standpoint from which it was written, the system of thought which underlies it, or the sense in which its special terms were employed and are to be understood. To state the case in short: the Bible was written by mystics for mystics, and from the mystical standpoint; and it has been interpreted by materialists for materialists, and from the materialistic standpoint. And, whereas from the latter and false standpoint it deserves the worst that its foes have said of it, from the former and true standpoint it contains a system of thought and rule of life founded in the nature itself of existence, verifiable by human faculty, and such as by their observance to enable man to turn his existence to the utmost account *in the long run*, by making of himself the best that he has it in him to be. Such is the thesis to the establishment of which these chapters will be devoted.

Stated in short, then, the contention to be established is that, whereas orthodoxy has substituted the shell of the nut of religious truth for the nut itself, and, disregarding its indigestible and innutritious character and the fatal consequences of its ingestion into the system, has insisted on its being swallowed whole; Agnosticism has contented itself with ridiculing and vilifying, and finally throwing away the nut in question, without having attempted, by cracking it, to ascertain the nature

of the kernel. And the behaviour of both sides alike is due to that materialistic tendency which ever exhibits itself in recognising the outer and lower element of things—the form, the appearance, and the letter, to the exclusion of the substance, the reality, and the spirit; due, this is to say, to what the Bible calls idolatry, and the worship of false gods—in short, to superstition. For, consisting, as does Materialism, in the preference of the external and apparent to the inner and real, of the illusion to the substance, of the symbol to the verity implied by it, Materialism is idolatry and superstition; and, in so far as the present age is the most materialistic of all ages, it is the most idolatrous and superstitious of all ages. And, inasmuch as orthodoxy was the first offender, by reason of its materialisation of mysteries purely spiritual, it is to the Church's fall that the world's fall is due.

Man is not naturally materialist, if only because he finds in himself that for which the materialistic hypothesis fails utterly to account—his consciousness of things moral and spiritual. And from a really spiritual religion—one that appealed at once to head and heart, mind and soul, intellect and moral conscience, and satisfied the needs of both these regions of his nature—he would never have recoiled. But “the woman”—who in one aspect of the parable stands for the Church—by inclining to the things of sense, to the letter as against the spirit, “the woman tempted him and he did eat,” and the result has been the world's fall, in our time, into depths of materiality never before reached. The “garden” of a perfect doctrine and rule of life has been forfeited for the wilderness of confusion and strife; the Cain in man—the sense-nature symbolised by the “fruits of the ground”—has killed the Abel in man, the intuitional faculty symbolised by the “lamb” of a pure and guileless spirit; and the priests of a fallen, because materialistic, science have followed the priests of a fallen, because materialistic, religion, and shed innocent blood upon what ought to be the pure altars of the Lord of both religion and science. Thus, for the typical sin of the age—the wholesale, ruthless torture of highly-organised and sensitive creatures on the plea of

scientific research, a practice by its sanction of which, more than any other, modern society has shown the demonising effects of Materialism—orthodoxy is primarily responsible, seeing that it represents but the extension to another plane of the sacerdotal principle of seeking salvation through the blood and agony of others, instead of by self-amendment. Similarly, the substitution by orthodoxy of the letter for the spirit, of the form for the reality in the sphere of religion, has led to the like substitution in the sphere of morals, until it has come that the form of man is preferred to the man, the body to the character, the material vehicle to its spiritual content, and the latter, which is really the man, is sacrificed to the former, which is but his phenomenal capsule. And, meanwhile, the indefeasible truth that the human form to be valid must, like any other mere form, be filled up—must have the man inside it—is utterly discarded and rejected. This, and all other indications of the limitation of perception, through which the world is suffering, are directly traceable to the action of orthodoxy in setting aside Scripture's own account of itself and preferring the "letter that kills" to the "spirit that gives life." Now, that which first and foremost the letter kills is the faculty of spiritual perception in those who trust in it. Hence the prayer of David, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy law."

CHAPTER II.

THE glimpse just given of the kind of teaching which underlies the letter of Scripture will now be followed by some examples of the directions laid down in Scripture for its interpretation, and also of the views of the best accredited authorities on the subject.

The sources of information whereby to determine this question are, mainly, these four :—(1) The Bible itself. (2) The consensus of recognised and qualified commentators. (3) The general usage in corresponding Scriptures. And (4) The intrinsic nature of the case as arising from the function of religion and discerned by the religious consciousness. It is proposed to say something on each of these heads.

(1) To speak first of the Bible's own account of itself. It would naturally be supposed, from the fact that there is controversy on the subject, that the Bible is either silent or obscure concerning it. Still more might it be supposed from the assumption of both orthodoxy and Agnosticism that the Bible insists unequivocally on being accepted literally and historically. But, so far from this being the case, it is not only not silent and not obscure, but it repeatedly and emphatically declares its real meaning to be interior, hidden, spiritual, and, therefore, neither literal, nor in the ordinary sense historical, and this in both Testaments.

For it repeatedly insists—as a reference to the concordance under the various forms of the words, “understanding,” “wisdom,” and “knowledge” at once shows—on the necessity of a spirit of understanding in regard to itself, and the duty of making the acquisition of such a spirit a matter of prime concern, as the one means of satisfaction for man's highest needs and aspirations; while it sternly denounces those who fail to

seek it. And there is an express statement to the effect that the leaders of Israel read to the people the book of the law, "with an interpretation, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. viii. 8; R.V., margin). All of which utterances would be superfluous and devoid of meaning if the letter represented the sense, and the meaning lay on the surface.

Passing to the New Testament, we find Paul explicitly declaring of certain narratives in Genesis, apparently historical, that "these things are an allegory," while by pronouncing as either "babes," or as "having a veil upon their hearts," those who accept them literally, he ascribes their conduct in so doing either to intellectual or to moral deficiency, besides clearly implying that the "veil" with which Moses is said to have covered his face, after receiving the law, was no other than the veil of symbol and allegory in which he wrap its expression. He furthermore expressly admits that his own teaching was of two kinds, one—which he calls "wisdom"—for the spiritually mature, and the other—which he calls "milk"—for the spiritually immature. And he positively affirms that "the letter kills, and the spirit alone has life."

Similarly with Jesus. Not only does he teach in parables, reserving the interpretation for his own private circle of initiates, and withholding even from these certain knowledges on the ground that they were not yet sufficiently advanced in their perception of spiritual things to be able to receive them; but he frequently reminds his hearers that he is speaking with a mystical meaning, and to an interior faculty, by exclaiming, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear"; by reproaching for their dulness of apprehension those whom he describes as "having eyes, but seeing not, and ears, but hearing not"; and vehemently charging the official guardians of religion with having taken away the key of knowledge, and neither entering in themselves nor suffering others to enter. He further directly affirms that his kingdom is not of this the outer sensible world, but of the world within man. All these utterances are intelligible only on the supposition of an interior and

hidden sense in Scripture, whose appeal is to an interior and spiritual faculty in man, and, therefore, to the soul as distinguished from the external reason. For, were the meaning literal and superficial, no special gift of understanding would be requisite for its apprehension.

Were the Bible really and fully translated—a work which yet remains to be accomplished—the position here maintained would be found to receive unlimited reinforcement, proving it, beyond possibility of cavil, to have been written—at least, in a very great measure—precisely after the plan of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Holy War," in that it refers to principles, processes, and states relating to the soul, and—even where referring to actual persons, things, and events—using these only in order to illustrate spiritual verities.

The following instance at once exemplifies this usage and affords a distinct affirmation of the principle contended for. Translating the names as well as the narrative, Joshua xv. 16-19 reads in this wise: "And the heart, well-disposed and sagacious [Caleb], said, Who-so shall smite the 'city,' or system, of the letter [Kirjath-sepher] and take it, to him will I give my daughter, the rending of the veil [Achsah] to wife. And God's good time [Othniel] took it, and received the rending of the veil for wife.....And she brought him as dowry the 'springs, upper and nether,' of the knowledges, spiritual and mental, which bring all blessings to their possessor. And, thenceforth, the place was no more called the city of the letter, but the Word [*Debir*]," in obvious token that not the letter, but the meaning veiled by the letter, and this alone, is held by the Bible to be the Word of God.

These are facts which cause those who are aware of them to marvel by what process of reasoning the literalists, whether orthodox or Agnostic, reconcile to their consciences their inveterate practice of insisting exclusively on the letter of Scripture, and, as is done by the latter, of vilifying and rejecting the Bible on the strength of the letter; or, as is done by the former, of denouncing as impious, and charging with "wresting Scripture from its obvious meaning," those who, being mystics, seek to discern the spirit through the letter.

For these, the impiety plainly consists in the rejection of the Bible's own account of itself, and the ascription to it of falsehood, fraud, and immorality, on the strength of the letter which it so emphatically repudiates.

(2) Coming to our second source of information, the body of recognised and qualified commentators, we find among those who regard Scripture as mystical rather than historical all the most intelligent Fathers, and the saints and seers, of the Church. Thus *Origen*, in his commentary on John, declares that, while every passage of Scripture has a spiritual meaning, many passages have no other meaning, but that there is often a spiritual meaning under a literal fiction. And he adds that it can be only a narrow intelligence which does not see that Scripture relates events which could not have occurred as described. He also upbraids his antagonist, Celsus, for his want of candour in treating the story of the Fall as if intended historically, and declares it unreasonable to deny to Moses the possession of truth under the veil of allegory, which it was the practice of all Eastern nations to employ.

St. Gregory, in his commentary on the book of Kings, says of the entire letter of Scripture that it is "not only dead, but deadly." St. Athanasius warns us that, were we to understand sacred writ according to the letter, we should fall into the most enormous blasphemies, as by ascribing cruelty and falsehood to the Deity—which is precisely what the orthodoxes and Agnostics have done. "St. Dionysius, the Areopagite," characterises the literal acceptance of Scripture as childishness; and this, as shown by Mosheim, was the view of all the Fathers of the second century. And such was the opinion also of the great Rabbinical commentators from Maimonides downwards, as well as of the later seers and scholars, Tauler, Eckart, Everard, Boehme, Swedenborg, and others. Says Dr. Everard, the learned and pious translator from the Arabic of the Hermetic book, "The Divine Pymander," in his "Gospel Treasury Opened" (A.D. 1659): "I say there is not one word [of Scripture] true according to the letter. Yet I say that every word, every syllable, every letter, is true. But they are true as He intended them that

spake them; they are true as God meant them, not as men will have them."

The late Cardinal Newman, too, relates in his "Apologia" how he himself had at one time been "carried away" by the idea suggested by the Fathers of a system of doctrine concealed beneath the Christian symbology, and differing, of course, widely from that in vogue. Here, one would have thought, had been vouchsafed the "kindly light" for which, in his famous hymn, the Cardinal sighed. For what nobler ambition could there be than to restore to Christendom the true religion of which its priests have robbed it? But, instead of following the "lead" thus vouchsafed, and summoning all his love and courage to the task of exploration and discovery, he turned his back on it, and, submitting himself to ecclesiastical authority, called—as in his "Grammar of Assent"—on others to join him in preferring intellectual suicide to the understanding of divine truth. Doing which, he became, indeed, a prince of the Church, but no inheritor, and therefore no dispenser, of divine knowledges.

(3) No less potent is the argument from the usage in corresponding cases. The Hebrew Kabbala and Talmud—especially the former—are little else than interpretations of the mystical meaning of Scripture, themselves couched in mystical language, and no less requiring a key for their explication. The Therapeuts and Essenes—an order to which both Jesus and the Baptist are supposed to have belonged—expounded their Scriptures allegorically; as also did Philo and other learned and pious Jews the books of Moses. And scholars of the highest repute declare the same of the initiated of all lands in regard to their own sacred mysteries, the object of the method employed being to save them from profanation and loss through being divulged to the ignorant and vulgar. According to Pausanias, the wisdom of the Greeks had from the earliest times been wrapped up in allegories and enigmas—a statement fully borne out by the results of recent research in regard to their interpretation. Sallust gives a detailed account of the reasons for the practice. And Sanchoniathon and Proclus say of the Phœnicians and

Egyptians respectively, that they veiled the great secrets of existence under figures and symbols; as also did the ancient schools of philosophers variously called Gnostics, Hermetists, Neo-Platonists, Alchemists, Rosicrucians, Masons, and others, whose subject was the perfectionment of man by means of his regeneration, and whose language—like that of all crafts—was technical, and therein symbolical and unintelligible, save to those who possessed the key to it. From all of which it surely follows that, were the Bible to be indeed literal and historical, it would differ in both manner and kind from all other books of its class.

CHAPTER III.

(4) To come to the argument from the intrinsic nature of the case as determined by the function of religion, the purpose of revelation, and the constitution of man.

It is the function of religion to enable man, considered as a permanent being, to turn his existence to the highest possible account by becoming the best that he has it in him to be.

And as it is only by knowing how and of what he is made, in respect of his permanent part, that he can work intelligently to this end, and only by revelation that such knowledge can be attained, it is the function of revelation to supply such knowledge. For revelation is the disclosure from interior and spiritual sources of knowledges which, by reason of their interior nature, can be obtained only from such sources.

Now, the permanent part of man is that which is called the soul, and it is only by means of the perfectionment of this part that the purpose of religion can be fulfilled. From this it follows that a Bible, which is by its nature a book of the soul, a compendium at once both of religion and of revelation, must be addressed to the soul, and not to the senses; and must deal, therefore, not with things physical and external, belonging to times, persons, and places, but with things spiritual and interior—with principles, processes, and states directly related to the soul, and valid always, everywhere and for all, being eternal verities inhering in man's nature, having their witness within him, and everlastingly cognisable by him. Being thus, religion and revelation are, respectively, definable—religion as the culture of the soul, and revelation as the knowledge requisite for such culture. And, whereas the soul is no exception to the rule, that things are at their best only when pure, it follows that only when pure the soul—and, therefore, the man—is perfect. So that the method of redemption is by interior purification. And

whereas this is an interior process, involving a change in the spiritual condition of the individual, it can by no means be effected from without or by proxy. From which it follows that, were the Bible historical in the sense ordinarily understood, it would contain no divine revelation and have no saving message for the souls of men. For, by the very fact of its externality, it would be unrelated to, and void of meaning for, man considered as a permanent being.

In this relation "the first lesson to be learnt...is the truth that the mind can apprehend and assimilate that only which presents itself mentally. In other words, the objective must be translated into the subjective before it can become food for the spiritual part of man. Truth is never phenomenal, but always metaphysical. The senses apprehend and are concerned with phenomena. But the senses represent the physical part only of man, and not that selfhood which philosophy intends when it speaks of man. This, the true ego, cannot come into relation with, or take account of, events and persons which present themselves phenomenally and objectively only. Thus, they are but vehicles and symbols by which truths, principles, and processes are conveyed to the subjective apprehension—the hieroglyphs, so to speak, in which these are portrayed. Belonging to time and to matter, persons and events are in their phenomenal aspect related only to the exterior and perishable man; while principles and truths, being noumenal and eternal, are cognisable only by that in man which, being also noumenal and eternal, is of like nature with them—namely, his subjective and spiritual part. For the apprehender and that which is apprehended must belong to the same category...From which it follows that, so long as we regard religious truth as essentially constituted of, and dependent upon, causes and effects appertaining to the physical plane, we have not yet grasped its real nature, and are spiritually unconscious and unilluminate. That which is true in religion is for spirit alone." (6)

(6) This and other citations not otherwise specified are from "The Perfect Way" and "Clothed with the Sun." E.M.

“ The keynote of religion is sounded in these words, ‘ *My kingdom is not of this world.* ’ All her mysteries, all her oracles, are conceived in this spirit, and similarly are all sacred scriptures to be interpreted. For anything in religion to be true and strong, it must be true and strong for the soul. The soul is the true and only person concerned; and any relation which religion may have to the body or phenomenal man, is indirect, and by correspondence only. It is for the soul that the Divine Word is written; and it is her nature, her history, her functions, her conflicts, her redemption, which are ever the theme of sacred narrative, prophecy, and doctrine.”

By this will be apprehended the force of the contention that the profound mystics from whom was derived so much of divine revelation as is contained in the Bible, while expressing themselves in terms belonging to the physical world, wrote from the spiritual standpoint, and intended truths belonging to the spiritual world, so that only when interpreted from that standpoint can their meaning be either comprehensible by the mind or assimilable by the soul.

There is yet another and insuperable objection, also founded in the nature of the case, to the conception of religion as something historical. This is the objection that historical knowledge is, by its very nature, incapable of verification and perpetuation, since the testimony on which it rests is itself fallible and perishable, and its evidences become ever fainter with the lapse of time, finally to disappear altogether. It is, moreover, accessible but to few, and its very externality precludes it from finding a witness in the soul. As well rest the demonstration of a proposition in geometry upon history as that of religious truth.

The objection is insuperable if the merits of a religion are to be determined by its fitness to meet the requirements of man's nature in any stage above the most rudimentary. Let us enumerate the conditions indispensable to this end. Not only must the religion be in itself such as to satisfy both head and heart, intelligence and moral conscience, mind and soul; it must also be perfectly simple, obviously reasonable, logically

coherent, self-evident, founded in the nature of things, incapable of being conceived of as otherwise, absolutely equitable, eternally true and recognisable as all these, invariable in operation, independent of all accidents of time, place, persons, and events, and comparable to a mathematical demonstration in that it needs no testimony or authority beyond those of the mind; and it must require for its efficacious observance nothing that is extraneous to, or beyond the reach of, the subject-individual, but within his ability to recognise and fulfil, provided only that he so will. And it must be such as to enable him by its observance to turn his existence to the highest account imaginable by him, and this as independently of any being other than himself, as if he were the sole personal entity in the universe, and were himself the universe. It is further necessary, because equitable, that he be allowed sufficient time and opportunity for the discovery, understanding, and application of the process. Such are the terms of an ideally perfect religion.

But this definition excludes all, or nearly all, the characteristics ordinarily insisted on as appertaining to religion, and notably to that of the Bible, literally and historically accepted. For, in excluding everything extraneous to the actual subject-individual, and requiring religion to be self-evident and necessarily true, it excludes as superfluous and irrelevant history, tradition, authority, revelation as ordinarily conceived of, ecclesiastical ordinance, priestly ministration, mediatorial function, vicarious satisfaction, and even the operation of Deity as subsisting without, and apart from, the man—all of which are essential elements in the prevailing conception of religion.

But this is not to say that the system contained in the Bible fails to realise an ideally perfect conception of religion. For although, when accepted literally and historically, it not merely fails to fulfil, but actually reverses every condition postulated of such a system, when interpreted mystically and spiritually it fulfils them all.

CHAPTER IV.

"All the mistakes made by orthodoxy in respect of Biblical interpretation come of referring statements of which the intention is spiritual and mystical, implying principles, processes, and states belonging to the soul, to persons, events, and things belonging to the body."

Similarly, all the objections made by Agnosticism and Materialism to revelation, miracles, divine incarnation, immortality, the reality and accessibility of the spiritual world, and other tenets of religion, come of ignorance of the true substance of existence, and the consequent substitution of matter for that substance.

From this it follows that to a true conception of the nature of substance these tenets, rightly apprehended, represent facts founded in the nature of existence, and bound, therefore, under due conditions, to find demonstration in existence.

To speak, then, of substance is to speak of that on which the whole system of Biblical cosmology, anthropology, and theology, and therefore of creation and redemption, turns. Hence, the exposition of it must, of necessity, form a prominent element in these chapters. But as a prior sketch of the rival doctrine at present in possession, its character and the methods of its partisans, will conduce to a better appreciation of that which has to be said about it—if only by exposing the fallacies at present prevalent—some remarks will first be made on that head.

Now, not even professed Materialists claim to know the nature either of matter or of the force by which it is actuated and evolution caused. Nay, in their ignorance, they are to be found straying so far from reason as to confound matter with that force, making the two things, force and substance, one and the same! They are, nevertheless, wont, on the strength of their assumption

respecting matter, to deny positively the possibility of experiences such as are claimed by those who possess experiential knowledge of the nature of substance. This is to say that, while recognising evolution as the method of nature, and admitting their total ignorance both of the force by which, and of the substance in which, evolution occurs, they presume to assign limits to evolution! And so far from maintaining that true and only scientific attitude of mind which, while it makes experience the basis of conclusion, holds opinion in suspense until the advent of experience, they have constructed their hypothesis first, and forthwith proceeded to reject, off-hand and prior to examination, all testimony to facts which they are unable to reconcile with their hypothesis, to the stultification of their pretensions to represent an experiential science. And not only have they, by thus asserting positively respecting that which they do not know positively, recklessly exposed themselves to the risk of false speaking; but, by bringing, as they have done, the charge of madness against all who claim to be in receipt of experiences incompatible with their narrow hypothesis, they have rendered freedom of expression in respect of experience not merely disagreeable, but in the highest degree dangerous. Such is the spirit, at once unagnostic and unscientific, of the science, so-called, of the day, in accordance with which the very confession of experiences tending to invalidate the materialistic hypothesis is, by its medical representatives, accounted plea justificatory of a certificate of lunacy. And such have been the effects of this practice that it is impossible to assign a limit to the extent to which knowledge has been kept back through the attachment of penalties, medical, social, or legal, to the confession of faculties and experiences passing the comprehension of those whose own mental horizon is avowedly limited to the physical and physiological. Persons who have evolved a larger share than ordinary of the faculties appertaining to humanity have been forced to keep silence concerning their results, because those who were deprived — *idiotes* the Greeks called them — have been in power. And so it has come that, while medical science fairly

enough defines madness as consisting in possession by a fixed idea which neither reason nor evidence can displace, its professors fail to see that the charge really lies against those who bring it on the grounds in question, in that they themselves have a fixed idea, which renders them inaccessible to reason and evidence on the subject, that such faculties and experiences are impossible. And, inasmuch as their incredulity rests on their own failure to have attained the consciousness of those planes in man's nature to which such faculties and experiences belong, they are really guilty of making themselves, while in such rudimentary condition, the measure of humanity. For, as man is only man in so far as he has evolved the consciousness of all the regions of being, spiritual as well as material, which are comprised in and which constitute humanity—to attain to which is to attain to his spiritual majority and become fully man—prior to this he is but man rudimentary, and this no matter what his attainments in respect of the outer and lower planes of consciousness. By which it is evident that when the Materialist or Agnostic says positively—as with curious inconsistency such persons do say—that “we neither have nor can have any certain knowledge concerning God, the soul, and immortality,” all that is true in such statement is that as Agnostics or Materialists we cannot have it, not that we cannot have it as men; since it is precisely as men who are fully man that we have it, and we are not fully man, in the sense of having attained to the full stature of humanity, until we have it.

In nothing does the besetting sin of the system in possession--the sin of unreasoning assumption--exhibit itself more conspicuously than in its restriction of the term “science” to the subjects exclusively of its own cognition, the physical and phenomenal, to the exclusion of the moral and spiritual. Resting as it does on the monstrous assumption that there is no science, actual or possible, of these things, such restriction is altogether arbitrary and unwarrantable. Even admitting—as Agnosticism does admit—the existence of a veil impenetrable to “science,” it forgets that the science on behalf of which such admission is made is

not really science, but nescience. For, as science means knowledge, the science which does not know is not knowledge, but ignorance. Yet such is the "science," and such are the limitations of the reasoning by which the men of the present generation have suffered themselves to be cajoled out of their inalienable birthright, the divine potentialities belonging to them in virtue of the nature of the substance of existence! (7)

This substance the philosophy in vogue assumes to be matter, and makes evolution occurring in it the method of nature. But, inasmuch as that philosophy rejects the idea of consciousness, mind, or life inhering in matter or pre-existing organism, and recognises, moreover, no permanent ego to retain and progress by means of impressions received, it not only fails utterly to account for evolution, but makes evolution itself impossible, and only escapes from its dilemma by borrowing from orthodoxy the device of miracle. And this in more than one respect. For, by deriving from this negative and unconscious basis—matter as defined by it—a positive universe teeming with life, consciousness, and intelligence, it first supposes the very miracle with which it taunts orthodoxy in respect of its doctrine of creation, that of getting something out of nothing; and, next, it makes matter transcend itself. These are achievements which involve the negation of its own fundamental postulate of orderly evolution. And, yet further, while professing to be atheist, it is really the-

(7) The following utterance may be cited as a typical instance of all the sins against reason above denounced: "There is no more certain fact than that we have absolutely no knowledge of any soul apart from association with the material frame. No man of sane mind will assert that he has any recollection of anything that happened before he was born, or that he has received any authentic message from any world of spirits inhabited by the dead [*sic*]. The last word of science is 'Beyond the Veil'" ("Agnosticism and Immortality," p. 9, by Samuel Laing). Elsewhere the same writer says: "What we say is that we neither have nor can have any positive, exact, scientific knowledge concerning God, the soul, and immortality." Thus does Agnosticism convict itself of incoherency, seeing that, by indulging in positive affirmation, it abandons its own position in order to usurp that of Gnosticism!—E.M.

ist, and even polytheist. For, by making matter self-subsistent and eternal, it virtually deifies matter, and makes of every particle of matter a separate divinity; while it posits the principles oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon as the four great gods of its pantheon, who between them build up the universe, and this after an image quite other than their own, seeing that it comprises properties and qualities which can in no wise be attributed to them. In all of which Materialism postulates a miracle transcending any imagined by orthodoxy. For even the most sanguine theist would shrink from investing Deity with the power of self-transcension. ⁽⁸⁾

From these and all other defects of logic the esoteric and real doctrine of the Bible concerning substance is free. For, while it derives all things from a source amply competent for their production, it posits orderly natural evolution as the method of manifestation, and allows space for its accomplishment by according permanence to the ego. And it does this alike as regards the processes theologically termed creation and redemption, each of which it recognises as founded in the nature of existence.

For (1) by creation it means, not the making of something out of nothing, but the making manifest of that which in itself is unmanifest. And (2) by redemption it means, not the reparation of an original defect of construction, but the completion and perfectionment of the entity concerned by means of the unfoldment and realisation of potentialities inherent in it from the beginning. And both processes—or rather both stages of the process, for it is really one and continuous—follow

(8) It is true that the foremost exponent of modern philosophic thought, Herbert Spencer, emphatically repudiates any such restriction of the capacities of the substance of existence, be that substance what it may. But he speaks for himself only, and stands nearly, if not quite, alone in such repudiation, and Materialism in its baldest form is everywhere rampant in the schools. While even he can find no better expression for substance than the "Unknowable"—a term every whit as applicable to life, mind, force, and whatever else is capable of being known only through its manifestations.—E.M.

necessarily from the nature of the substance and of the force in and by which evolution is accomplished.

This substance neither is nor can be matter. For the term "substance" implies that which *sub-stands*, or underlies, that which appears; and that which appears is not that which *is*, since appearance is not reality; and it is this last that is substance. Wherefore substance is necessarily spirit—such being the term to denote the immaterial. And as there is necessarily but one original substance, of which all things are modes, matter is a mode of spirit, and is definable as *spirit projected into conditions and limitations and made exteriorly cognisable*.

But, being spirit, matter is capable of reverting to spirit, and tends so to revert. This tendency of matter to revert to spirit—or, stated exactly, this tendency of substance to revert from its material, manifest, and artificial condition to its spiritual, unmanifest, and normal condition—is the cause of evolution; and but for it—but for matter being a mode of something superior to itself as matter, or but for substance, when in the condition of matter, recognising itself as entitled to a superior condition—evolution would be impossible; since the impulse to evolve would be lacking.

But evolution is not of substance itself. For, being original and self-subsistent, it is incapable of enhancement. Evolution is of the manifestation of the properties and qualities of substance in the subject-entity of the process. Being inherent, these properties and qualities must, in due course, unless arbitrarily withheld, find manifestation. And, as this occurs through evolution, *evolution is the manifestation of inherency.* (9)

(9) In a letter in the *Agnostic Journal* of the 5th January, 1895, Edward Maitland says: "A Materialistic science, working with a faculty mutilate and depraved, the intellect divorced from the intuition and leagued with the sense-nature, necessarily mistakes matter for substance, and builds its system on the appearance instead of on the reality of which matter is the appearance, and hence defines evolution as the 'integration of matter.' Doing which, it arbitrarily restricts man to the capacities of matter as matter, and assigns limits to evolution, even to making evolution itself impossible; for, without a permanent and sub-

From all which it follows that man's potentialities depend upon the nature of the substance of which he is constituted; and, also, that, until this is determined, only the sheerest presumption would venture to assign limits to his evolution. We have seen the limits assigned by the nescience of the dominant school.

The science of the Bible assigns no limits. Its whole object is to show that the inherency of substance is divine, and, therefore, that evolution is accomplished only with the realisation of divinity. And this, not by any one special, exceptional, and abnormal personage, but by every individuation whatever of substance. For that with which the Bible, esoterically regarded, deals, is not persons, but principles; not men, but man; and this man considered, not as a material and phenomenal, but as a spiritual and substantial, being. And that which the Bible recognises as alone withholding any man from the realisation of his proper divine potentialities is his own will.

To say which is to say that the esoteric and real doctrine of the Bible is the doctrine most of all abhorred and anathematised of orthodoxy—the doctrine of Pantheism.

stantial ego, to retain and advance by means of experiences received, there can be no evolution. Whereas the truth is, as now revealed anew, and demonstrated by actual experience, that, owing to the divinity of the substance of existence, there is no limit to the unfoldment of the universe within man or without him; but, as the manifestation of a divine inherency, evolution is accomplished only by the realisation of divinity. Such is the scientific statement of the Christ doctrine as held in the Church Unfallen, and contained in the Bible, and as it will be held in the Church, now fallen, in the regeneration to be accomplished by the New Gospel of Interpretation.”—S.H.H.

CHAPTER V.

BUT the Pantheism which constitutes the esoteric and real doctrine of the Bible is not that which ordinarily passes under that name. For it is definable in this wise: All things are God in virtue of their constituent principles; but all things are not God in the condition of God. This is to say that, while God is Being, Being is God only when in a state of perfection.

The limitation is due to creation. Creation represents and occurs by means of the projection—mystically called the fall—of the divine substance into conditions and limitations, and, without such fall or projection, could not be. For creation, which is manifestation, involves and implies degrees and opposites and contrasts. And occurring necessarily in time and space, and being conditioned by these, it is necessarily gradual. And whereas these limitations of what in itself is absolutely good are the cause of "evil," and arise through matter, matter is the cause of evil. But this is not to say that matter is itself evil. On the contrary, matter is the mode of manifestation of spirit, and spirit does not become evil by becoming manifest. The idea of a purely spiritual evil involves a contradiction of terms.

In thus making spirit the one original being, and evil the result of the limitation of spirit, the Bible vindicates the logical superiority of its philosophy over that which, failing to discover a sufficiently comprehensive unity with which to begin the table of numbers, begins it with a duality by supposing two original self-subsistent principles which are in opposition to each other—one of good, and one of evil.

Nevertheless, the original *one* of the Bible is a duality as well as a unity, but in a way that has escaped recognition alike by orthodoxy and by its opponents, to the utter failure of both parties to comprehend the doctrine, at once supplementary and complementary, of the

trinity. For this, too, like other ecclesiastical doctrines, represents, in its proper and intended sense, a necessary and self-evident truth. But while the doctrines, both of the unity and trinity of original being, have always found recognition, however unintelligently, the doctrine of the duality has been entirely suppressed or ignored. None the less is it of such supreme importance that without it neither the Bible nor Christianity, nor anything else in heaven or on earth, can be comprehended aright. And the wise of old, by whom it was originally discerned and formulated, looked forward to the world's recognition of it as the commencement and cause of a new and better age than any that had preceded it; and, what vastly enhances its interest for us, they specified this precise epoch of ours as that wherein it would first find promulgation and recognition. Meanwhile, for its safekeeping until the human consciousness should be ripe and competent for its reception, they concealed it—according to mystical usage—beneath symbolical expressions, calling it, among others, the doctrine of the “Woman,” and the age of its recognition and practical adoption the “Woman's Age.” This was, first, because, being the doctrine of substance, they recognised substance as the feminine principle of being; and, next, because only when man knows of what he consists will he so order his life as to enable him to realise his highest potentialities.

Now, as has already been intimated, it is not the Bible, but orthodoxy, that is responsible for the definition of creation as the making of something out of nothing. It is true that prior to creation there was *no thing*; but this is not to say there was *nothing*, and it could by no possibility be nothing ⁽¹⁰⁾. For before the beginning of things there must be the potentiality of things. Things are not conceivable of as self-subsistent. Only the unlimited, unindividuated, and homogeneous can be also the eternal. And whatever fulfils this description is God. Hence, for the Bible, God is the potentiality of all that has been, that is, and that can be, and of God's energy and substance all things

(10) See Appendix, p. 79.

consist. Or, as the Bible puts it, "In Him we live and move and have our being; and of His fulness we have all received."

Now, these two, energy and substance, are the two terms of the duality regarded by the Bible as subsisting in the unity of original being, and by virtue of which creation alone is possible. For the Bible recognises creation, which—be it always remembered—is manifestation, as occurring through generation—as when it speaks of "the generations of the heavens and of the earth," or worlds spiritual and material. And generation is not of one, but of twain, the twain subsisting in the one, as the two sexes in one humanity. Energy and substance, moreover, are, by their nature, respectively of masculine and feminine potency; *He* is the "father," and *She* is the "mother." But in themselves they are unmanifest, no matter what the plane of activity concerned, the invisible or the visible, and can be known only through their mutual product, expression, or—to use the Bible term—their "Word" or "Son." Through this alone it is that what in itself is unmanifest, and, therefore, unknowable and unknown, becomes manifest, knowable, and known; a truth enunciated in the saying ascribed to the typical Man Regenerate, or "born again of water and of the spirit"—that is, of substance and energy in their pure and, therefore, divine condition: "No man cometh to the Father but by me. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also"; the term Father, or celestial energy, implying also the Mother, or celestial substance. And as this law holds good for every plane or sphere of being, unmanifest or manifest, it follows that *every entity which is manifest is manifest through the evolution of its trinity*. And these three—energy, substance, and their resultant expression, or phenomenon—are not three entities, but one entity. Such and so simple is the explanation of the doctrine which—representing a necessary and self-evident truth—the Church has exalted as an incomprehensible mystery, and the Agnostics—on the strength of the Church's presentation of it—have rejected off-hand as a monstrous absurdity, without taking the trouble to look deeper.

It is true that the doctrine of the Trinity as thus formulated is not that insisted on by orthodoxy and rejected by Agnosticism. But it differs from this only by reason of its representing a prior stage in thought. Bent on withholding, if not ignorant of, the doctrine of substance, orthodoxy has merged the feminine principle of being in the masculine, and, calling the two combined the "Father," has made this the first person, and the "Son" the second, and completed the Trinity by taking into it as third person the mode of Deity called the Holy Ghost or Spirit; this being the theological term for original being when passing from passivity into activity for the purpose of manifestation, whether in creation or redemption. By the Holy Ghost, then, is meant Deity dynamic, or in action, as distinguished from Deity static, or in repose; and that the procession of this "person" is said to be from the Father (really Father-Mother) through the Son ⁽¹⁾ is because the latter represents the evolution of its trinity indispensable to the manifestation of any entity. And whereas creation occurs by self-segmentation, and this is the principle of generation, God is truly describable as the "Father-Mother Almighty of whose substance are the generations of the heavens and the earth," or worlds spiritual and material. ⁽²⁾

(1) The ecclesiastical student will recognise in this presentation of the Trinity the reconciliation of the difference between the Greek and Latin Churches—a difference which could not have arisen but for the suppression of the feminine element in Deity. Both are right in that which they affirm. The Churches have further ministered to unintelligibility by their omission to distinguish between the Trinities of the unmanifest and the manifest—an omission the result of which has been to identify the Christ who, as the "Son" in the Trinity within man, is called "*our Lord*," with the Adonai, who, as the "Son" in the Trinity of the unmanifest, is called "*the Lord*," of whom the Christ is the counterpart or correspondence. The doctrine involved in these matters, though recondite, is none the less absolutely logical and indefeasible, every step being as sure and necessary as that of a mathematical demonstration. And the only sense in which it is a "mystery" is that of its belonging to an interior or "mystical" region of thought and experience.—E.M.

(2) See further on this subject the letter, dated 11th October, 1891, of Edward Maitland, printed in the Appendix, p. 70.

CHAPTER VI.

Now, the Mosaic synonyms for substance, whether in reference to the invisible "heavens" or the visible universe, are the "deep" and the "waters." In man it is called the "woman" and also "water," and implies the soul, this being the substance and "mother" of the real as distinguished from the apparent man. Hence the Church also, as representing the soul collective of man, is called the "woman." And throughout the Bible, whenever Deity is exhibited as operating on behalf of any cosmic entity, be it the universe, a system, a planet, or an individual person, and whether for its physical generation or spiritual regeneration, the process is always described as, in some mode, the moving of the spirit, or energy, of God, upon the face of the waters, or substance, of God; the resultant, which completes their trinity and accomplishes their manifestation, being according to the plane of activity concerned. Of the various planes of activity, the last and lowest, the physical, occurs through the coagulation, exteriorly, of the substance assigned for that plane—namely, the astral ether—in such wise that it becomes in the outermost matter. And this is occultly indicated in the saying, "by the gathering together, or coagulation, of the waters, the dry land—earth or matter—appears"; though the same words are forthwith used in a different and more obvious sense. And inasmuch as energy and substance are, whatever the plane, modes of Deity in operation, and Deity in operation is called Holy Spirit, all things consist of Holy Spirit.

According to the Bible cosmogony, the constitution of things is fourfold, whether for the macrocosm or the microcosm; and the four are, for the former, energy, substance, astral ether, and matter; and for the latter their organic correspondences, spirit, soul, mind, and

body. This fourfold existence constitutes what is called the "vehicle" in which Deity descends into manifestation, and is implied in the fourfold river of Eden, the four men in the ark of Noah, the fourfold car of Ezekiel, the four living creatures of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, and the number and character of the gospels, the four elements also being sometimes implied. And, in accordance with this manifold nature of existence, the mystical Scriptures have a manifold meaning and application which, when referring to the spiritual and intellectual only, is dual; when referring to the four divisions just enumerated, is quadruple; and when referring to the spheres of the seven actuating principles or "gods" by which the kosmos is elaborated, is septuple. Thus, when read with this key, the first chapter of Genesis, so far from dealing exclusively, or even primarily, with the physical world, proves to have a quadruple significance, in that it describes four orders of generation—that of the creative Elohim, sephiroth, gods, or principles subsisting in original being; that of the kingdom of heaven, or spiritual world; that of the visible universe; and that of the Church of Christ; all of which are necessarily described in terms derived from the physical plane.

While fourfold as to composition, every kosmic entity—whether an individual or a universe—owes its elaboration to a sevenfold co-operation—that, namely, of the seven divine potencies just mentioned, who subsist in the original unity as the seven rays of the prism in light; and, like light, they find manifestation on their emergence from the prism constituted by the Trinity, on the passage of Deity into activity or procession of the Holy Ghost, of which they are the immediate differentiations. These are they who are represented in Genesis as saying, "Let us make man in our image," after they have accomplished the earlier stages of his construction. And as each of them has a part to perform in the elaboration of man, and only when built up of them all is he made in the divine image, the work of each constitutes—whatever the actual period—a "day" or stage in his creation, and the whole a "week."

It is from these that the number seven originally derives its sanctity, and it is to these that reference is made in the Bible whenever that number is used, as it frequently is used in describing the process of man's spiritual elaboration under the name of Israel. They are at once the seven creative spirits of God, the seven judges of Israel, the seven angels of the churches, the seven golden candlesticks, the seven "planets" or stations of the solar system—those in excess of that number belonging to the second octave, like the notes in music—and the seven great gods of the mythologies. And concerning them the sacred mysteries of antiquity, the basis of the Bible, in a ritual now "miraculously" (3), but none the less orderly, recovered (4)—the method being the rare, but not unknown, one of intuitional or "psychic" recollection—discourse sublimely as follows:—

"In the bosom of the Eternal were all the Gods comprehended, as the seven spirits of the prism, contained in the Invisible Light.....

"Except by Three in One, the Spirits of the Invisible Light could not have been made manifest.

"But now is the prism perfect, and the generation of the Gods discovered in their order.....

"By the word of Elohim were the seven Elohim manifest:

"Even the seven Spirits of God, in the order of their precedence:

"The Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel, the Spirit of Power, the

(3) Defining miracles as the natural effects of exceptional causes, the causes being exceptional only because the persons are rare who have developed the powers to which miracles are due.
—E.M.

(4) The story of the recovery of this and other rituals is told in "The Life of Anna Kingsford." Edward Maitland there says: "In these wondrous chapters we found a synthesis and an analysis combined of the sacred mysteries of all the great religions of antiquity, and the true *origines* of Christianity as originally and divinely intended, together with the secret and method of its corruption and perversion into that which now bears its name." (Vol. I., p. 293).—S.H.H.

Spirit of Knowledge, the Spirit of Righteousness, and the Spirit of Divine Awfulness.

“All these are co-equal and co-eternal.

“Each has the nature of the whole in itself: and each is a perfect entity.

“And the brightness of their manifestation shineth forth from the midst of each, as wheel within wheel, encircling the White Throne of the Invisible Trinity in Unity.

“These are the Divine Fires which burn before the presence of God: which proceed from the Spirit, and are one with the Spirit.

“He is divided, yet not diminished: He is All, and He is One.

“For the Spirit of God is as a flame of fire which the Word of God divideth into many: yet the original flame is not decreased, nor the power thereof nor the brightness thereof lessened.

“Thou mayst light many lamps from the flame of one: yet thou dost in nothing diminish that first flame.

“Now the Spirit of God is expressed by the Word of God, which is Adonai.

“For without the Word the Will could have had no utterance.

“Thus the Divine Will divided the Spirit of God, and the Seven Fires went forth from the bosom of God, and became seven spiritual entities.

“They went forth into the Divine Substance, which is the substance of all that is.”

CHAPTER VII.

As in the story of the Creation so in the story of the Flood, the theme is, first and foremost, the spiritual elaboration of man, and only subordinately, generally, and by correspondence, has it any physical import; and the only sense in which it is intended historically is that in which it relates to cataclysms occurring in the spiritual history of the race. For it tells how, when the soul of man, whether individual or collective, has become so deep sunk in materiality as to have lost the consciousness of its true nature, and spiritual "darkness is on the face of the deep" of man's mind, and "the wickedness of man is great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually," then "the spirit of God moves on the face of the waters" of God, as individuated in man, and forthwith the ark of human nature, with its three divisions, "lower, middle, and upper"—or physical, intellectual, and spiritual—containing its four principles, the spirit, the soul, the mind, and the body, denoted by Noah and his three sons, together with its gifts and graces, affections and appetites, symbolised by the animals, and actuated by the "eight persons," God and the seven spirits of God, is upborne on a flood of intuition—the soul's awakened perceptions and recollections—above "all the high hills that are under the heaven"—the hills of man's intellectual self-conceit, which, be they high as they may, can in no wise reach to Heaven or the spiritual, as the Babel-builders, or constructors of materialistic systems, in all ages find—to be at length deposited safe on the summit of spiritual attainment, Ararat—a term identical with *Arahat*, the Hindoo name for the adept in spiritual science—while all that is vile and base in man is overwhelmed and destroyed, and humanity, "regenerate of water and the spirit," is made a "new creature." And

thenceforth the "bow"—symbol of the "seven spirits of God"—is "set in the clouds of the heaven" of man's soul, reminding him ever of God's immanence in the world, and, so long as it is discerned, rendering another such "flood" unnecessary; since no more then are the "sons of God," or man intuitional and spiritual, liable to become enamoured of the "daughters of men," or things intellectual merely and material.

Thus does the story of the Flood, like that of Creation, when duly read from its mystical and proper standpoint, disclose itself as no physical monstrosity, but as a spiritual verity everlastingly true of the human soul so long as by reason of its association with matter it is subject to alternations of obscurity and illumination. No history, then, is it but a prophecy—or utterance of the things of the soul—and this a prophecy which, in our day, is finding fulfilment on a scale which bids fair to surpass all previous experience. For, just as the depth of materiality to which the world has now sunk is lower than any hitherto reached, so does the flood of intuition on which it is now being upborne promise to land it on heights transcending any hitherto reached, to the complete submergence and destruction of all that, being inveterately materialistic, is incapable of redemption. Meanwhile the high priests of a materialistic science, instead of "ploughing with the heifer" of the spiritual consciousness, cling to the paths of the orthodox literalism, and, unable to read the riddle of the times, or the allegories of the Creation and the Flood, ignore the former and denounce the latter as "lies." (5)

In illustration of the wealth of spiritual allusion buried in these symbols, for such indeed they are, it must suffice here to lift a corner of the veil of the mysteries concealed under one of the personages of the latter. In Ham, for example, who stands for the bodily nature, we find illustrated the body's function

(5) *Sic* Professor Huxley, *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1890. He is, however, fairly entitled to plead in extenuation the provocation received from the orthodox persistence in unreasoning literalism of his opponent, Mr. Gladstone.—E.M.

as the manifestor of the spirit, and its incapacity to appreciate spiritual mysteries, by his exposure of the person of his father, Noah, who stands at once for the spirit and for the mysteries of the spirit; while his other sons, Shem and Japhet, who stand for the soul and the mind, which are themselves unmanifest, reverence and veil the spirit and its mysteries. The curse pronounced on Canaan, the "son" of Ham: "A servant of servants shall he be to his brethren," implies the body's subordination to its superior fellow principles in man. And while Ham's name is identical with Cham or Khemi, the genius of Egypt—also a symbol of the body—who represents the principle of physical generation, and is the root of the words "Alchemy" and "Chemistry," so called in token of the transmutatory or generative properties of matter; his son Canaan, which signifies low-lying lands, is the continuator of Cain, the "tiller of the ground" or lower nature, and gives his name to the Canaanites, or lower appetites and propensities, which Israel, as the soul bent on spiritual perfection, must subdue and eradicate before he can inherit the "promised land" of his quest.

Passing on to the culminating instance given in the Bible of the spirit or energy of God moving upon the waters, or substance, of God, the scene of action becomes an individual soul, who, having crushed in herself the head of the serpent of the sense-nature, is no longer "Eve" and subject to materiality, and competent to be "mother" only of man degenerate; but who, purified from the "original sin" of materiality, has reversed in herself the fall, and, representing the "waters" of substance restored to its divine because pure condition, is called in consequence Virgin Maria, and qualified to be "mother" of man regenerate. Not of his physical part—the mystic Scriptures deal not with material things, but with spiritual realities—but of his substantial selfhood, the inner and spiritual man, the esoteric Christ or "Christ within," who, as the immediate product of pure spirit operating in a pure soul, and constituted of their life and substance—the "blood" and the "water" of the pierced Christ—is himself purely spiritual, and is truly said to have for

his parents the Holy Ghost and Virgin Maria; and who, being thus divinely engendered in man as matrix, is "son" at once of God and of man, and is God-man. And that he is called Christ ⁽⁶⁾ is because he is suffused or "anointed," not of any physical ointment, but of the "oil" of divinity, even pure spirit, which is poured out upon him without measure. And that he is called Jesus ⁽⁶⁾ is because Jesus signifies Liberaor, and in and by this new selfhood within him the man is liberated at once from the limitations of matter and from liability for his past shortcomings. This is the only sense in which the term "vicarious" is applicable. The "old man" has disappeared in the new, and the new is sinless.

This, then, and no other, is the doctrine of divine incarnation as set forth in the Bible. Whenever and wherever there is a pure spirit in a pure soul—and only in a pure soul can such spirit subsist—there is God individuated. And whenever and wherever such soul and spirit are in a human body, there is God incarnated. For spirit is not the less God because individu-

⁽⁶⁾ In the letter dated 19th September, 1891, referred to in the preface to this edition, Mr. Maitland says that, what he undertook to do in this series of articles was, "not to propose a substitute for the term 'Christ,' nor to enter on the question of the historical personality of Jesus, but to expound the philosophic conception intended by the former, and its illustration by the character assigned to the latter. That the rejection of either because 'hackneyed,' 'prostituted,' or 'stale,' would have been wholly incompatible with the vindication and rehabilitation undertaken by me, which comprised the terms as well as the doctrines concerned, all of which alike have been the victims of misrepresentation." And in a letter (the original MS. of which is in my possession) sent on the 22nd September, 1891, for publication in the *Agnostic Journal*, Edward Maitland, in reply to a critic, says:—"that to deal with 'Occultism' or, as I prefer to call it, 'Mysticism,' while ignoring 'Jesus,' 'Christ' and 'the old clothes' of the Bible, would be tantamount to omitting Hamlet from the play of Hamlet, and the inner chambers and top corner-stone from the great pyramid. For those who know—a category from which your profession of Agnosticism excludes you, positive though your language is apt to be—the Bible is the very prince of occult books, and that which is meant by 'Christ' is its crowning mystery."—S.H.H.

ated in a human soul, or because, when thus individuated, such soul is invested with a human body. But always is it the interior spiritual selfhood that is thus engendered, and is the "son" to the "Father-Mother" in the Trinity of the manifest. Concerning the parentage of the physical selfhood of Jesus, the human vehicle of the Christ, the Gospels are silent.

As if expressly to leave no doubt on the subject for those who care to know, and to deprive orthodoxy of any excuse for the distortion or suppression of a doctrine so simple, logical, and obvious, the Gospels represent their typical man regenerate as himself explaining it to a representative of the orthodoxy of his time, whose ignorance of it elicited from Jesus the exclamation—no less appropriate to the corresponding class now—"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things!" For, in saying to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again of water and the spirit," Jesus declared the necessity to every person, as the sole condition and means of salvation, of being "born" precisely as he himself is said to have been born, of "Virgin Mary" and "Holy Ghost," these terms implying the two constituent principles, substance and energy, or soul and spirit, of the individual himself, restored to their original divine condition of purity. From which it follows that to deny the "divinity of Jesus Christ," and therein the doctrine of divine incarnation, is to deny to man the possibility of his having a pure soul and spirit, and to Deity the power of self-individuation; to deny either of which is to place an arbitrary limit to evolution, to cut man off from the realisation of his proper perfection, and—by making parent and offspring of diverse substance—to interpose an impassable barrier between God and man (?). Now,

(7) The above definition of divine incarnation entirely disposes of the objection to it contained in the following utterance of one of the most thoughtful and sincere of the Agnostic writers of the day: "The high purpose of scepticism is to winnow out of the human mind all such beliefs as prevent its expansion and progress. Among these are the doctrines of a personal God, of miracles, the divinity of Jesus Christ, of the infallibility of the Bible, of heaven and hell" ("The Noble Path," by F. J. Gould, being No. V. of "Stepping-Stones to Agnosticism").—E.M.

whatever may be the doctrine of modern science, that of the Bible recognises first and foremost the doctrine of Heredity; and in virtue of this doctrine it represents man as made at once in the image of his primary progenitor, God, and of his intermediary progenitors, the four elements and the solar system; whereof his body, mind, soul, and spirit correspond in the one to earth, fire, water, and air, and in the other to the spheres planetary, atmospheric, ethereal and solar. And the reasons why any man fails to discern the two higher are, first, because his attention is riveted so exclusively on the outer and lower that he never looks inwards and upwards; and, next, because, through the grossness of his life and thought, his mental atmosphere is so thick-laden with the exhalations arising from below as to obscure and shut out from view the clear heaven above of his soul and the sun of his divine spirit. These are none the less there and perceptible, notwithstanding his inability to discern them. For there is no really invisible world. But, in order to do this, it is above all things necessary that he be a Freethinker; not as this noblest of all the titles of man has come to be regarded. They who have usurped it are, for the most part, scarcely even thinkers; least of all are they free thinkers. To think freely is to suffer thought to range equally in all directions open to thought, not merely outwards and downwards to matter and negation, but also inwards and upwards to spirit and reality. Only by ascending thither can man complete the system of his thought and attain to certitude of truth; for only there is to be found the substantial idea which interprets the phenomenal fact. For the idea is of the spirit, and is spirit.

Now, of the heavens within man there are three degrees—purity of life, purity of heart, and purity of thought. And in such degree as man attains thereto he “sees God.”

CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE orthodoxy, recognising only the sacerdotal aspect of the Bible, posits substitution as the means of salvation and eternal punishment as the alternative, thereby making man immortal under all circumstances, it is a commonplace of Agnosticism to say that the Old Testament does not recognise immortality at all. Neither of these views accords with the esoteric sense of the Bible. For in this sense it teaches immortality throughout, and posits as the means of salvation regeneration as occurring through orderly evolution. For (1) the warning against eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge "lest ye die"—a warning which, by the nature of things, must have been addressed, not to the man physical, but to the man spiritual, since the former would die in any case—implies immortality by the very fact of contemplating the possibility of its forfeiture. And (2) the sentence pronounced on the serpent, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman"—that is, the soul—"and between thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (as the Douay version renders the passage), is a declaration at once of the permanence of the soul—provided the possible forfeiture is not incurred—and of her power, by means of evolution, to escape the trammels of the sense-nature—implied by the serpent—and by regaining her proper purity to produce her proper divine offspring. Herein the Bible recognises these several doctrines: (1) The permanence of the ego; (2) the divinity of inherency; (3) evolution as the manifestation of that inherency; (4) regeneration as the crowning stage of evolution and the means of salvation; and (5) re-incarnation, or a multiplicity of earth-lives, as indispensable to regeneration by affording the opportunities requisite for the accomplishment of the process. The reason of this last is that regeneration is *from out of* the body, and must, therefore, at least to a certain advanced stage, be accomplished while in the body; and also that it does not even commence until many earth-lives have been lived. For it

consists in the elaboration of a spiritual and substantial selfhood out of elements which, though not matter, are contained in matter, and during association with matter, in such wise as to constitute that involuntional because spiritual evolution which is the sequel and crown of the outward and physical evolution, and requires for its accomplishment a period far exceeding that of any single earth-life.

All this is involved in the declaration of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," even as I, the typical man regenerate, am said to have been born again, "of water and of the spirit," which—though personified as Virgin Mary and Holy Ghost, because pure and divine—are none the less man's own soul and spirit restored to their original condition. From which it follows that, were not the course of nature such as to afford the opportunities requisite for accomplishing the process, both the promise to Eve and the declaration to Nicodemus would have been a mockery. And, moreover, as one who had himself been "perfected through suffering"—through the experiences, this is, endured over a long course of previous existences—in such degree as to be far advanced on the path at the very commencement of his last life, Jesus was himself a demonstration of the doctrine in question, and able to speak from his own experience, since the ability to recollect its past existences is at once the token and result of the soul's maturity. But, even so, that only is recalled which has been of such nature and intensity as to reach beyond the body to the soul, and thus become a part and perpetual possession of the soul. Hence the fallacy of pleading the non-recollection of external facts in disproof of the doctrine. Jesus was in a position to say, with the writer of the Book of Wisdom, "Being good, I came into a body undefiled," his goodness being the result of the lessons learnt in previous lives.

Read percipiently, then, the Bible is constructed wholly upon the basis of the capacity of the ego to persist through all changes of form and condition, returning again and again into the body in order to acquire the strength and knowledge requisite to enable

it to overcome, and to dispense with the need of, the body. It is true that the doctrine, once called, of Transmigration, and now of Re-incarnation, is implied rather than expressed in the Gospels. But it is there; and without it no manifestation of the Christ had been possible. The absence of explicit inculcation is readily accounted for. The Christ state is the product and result of a multiplicity of earth-lives; and there is no more birth nor death for those who have attained that state. The purpose of the Gospels was to exhibit the man already so far regenerate as to have passed beyond the need of return on his own account. That he recognised the doctrine is shown by his allowing his disciples to hold it uncontradicted when questioned by them concerning the past lives of the blind man. Of course "this man" had not sinned in a previous existence, for the man part has but one existence, the external personality being renewed at each birth; that alone whose sin in a previous life could have entailed suffering in the present, was the soul of the man. And that Jesus was silent concerning this was due to the secrecy he was bound to observe respecting the affairs of other souls, and especially in regard to one who was in the position to him of a penitent to his confessor.

The recognition of John the Baptist as a possible re-incarnation of Elijah is another indication of the presence of this doctrine in the Bible. Of course, John could at most have been overshadowed and spoken through by the spirit or "angel" of Elijah. For, as one who had undergone transmutation, Elijah was a man regenerate, while John was not yet "in the kingdom." Though the "greatest among those born of women"—of human generation, that is—John was not yet re-born of "the woman" or soul, and not yet regenerate; and with the withdrawal of the overshadowing influence he lost his percipience and fell into scepticism. (8)

(8) So far from this method of describing the parentage of the man regenerate being confined to the Bible, it was always and everywhere the technical, mystical mode of expression. Every

It is not alone for its moral and intellectual training that the soul requires such repeated and prolonged association with matter, but also for its substantial increase. This is because the soul grows by accretion, and *life is the elaboration of soul through the varied transformations of matter*. The soul must, therefore—unless it is to remain feeble, stunted, and dwarfed—return again and again to the body, both as an infant to its mother for sustenance and as a child to its school for education and discipline. For every soul must be perfected through its own suffering of experiences felt and applied; and this over whatever long range of existences may be needful for the purpose. It is a stupendous ladder that has to be climbed, to reach from rudimentary being to the full stature of the perfect humanity; and to take away his suffering would be to deprive man of his means of redemption and perfectionment. And this is precisely what orthodoxy does when it makes salvation consist in exemption, not from the liability to sin, but from the consequences of sin. That he who becomes a Christ is already so far advanced on the road to full regeneration as to be able to complete the process in a single further lifetime is because, first, of the great number of his earth-lives, and, next, of the use he has made of them. The end in view is the conquest over materiality; and it is not by flight from the body or the death of the body, but by struggle with the body and the death *to* the body, that strength and victory are gained (9). Moreover, the body is even more the result than the cause of the soul's materiality. Its enemy is within, and no mere change of environment

divinised man was said to be God-begotten and virgin-born, and to have for mother a king's daughter; the last being the title given to the soul in virtue of her derivation from the higher mind, which is always "king" in the human system, while the offspring of this mystic conjunction was termed "twice-born" and "Son of God." Initiates were, of course, aware that it was the man spiritual only that was thus describable; but the multitude and the mere priest, then as now, supposed it to be the man physical. In the mysteries he only is accounted as really born who is regenerate or "twice-born"; the first birth being that of the man phenomenal only, while the second is that of the man substantial.—E.M.

will enable him to be got rid of. "A man's foes"—those which alone can harm the soul—"are of his own household." The body is overcome, and can be dispensed with by the soul, only when the tendencies which brought it into the body are eradicated. The individual is not the result of his conditions; his conditions are the result of himself—the outer of the inner. To put a pig into a palace is not to make him a prince, but to make the palace a pigstye. The soul must learn to make of the body a palace, or rather a temple, before it is fitted for its heavenly state. For, as it is written in the Scriptures from which Scripture itself was written:—

"Within thee, O man, is the universe; the thrones of all the Gods are in thy temple.

"I have said unto men, Ye are Gods; ye are all in the image of the Most High.

"No man can know God unless he first understand himself.

"God is nothing that man is not. What man is, that God is likewise.

"As God is at the heart of the outer world, so also is God at the heart of the world within thee.

"When the God within thee shall be wholly united to the God without, then shalt thou be one with the Most High.

"Thy will shall be God's will, and the Son shall be as the Father.....

"But if thou wilt not, then a stronger than thou art shall bind thee, and spoil thine house and thy goods.

"An uncleanly temple shalt thou be; the hold of all manner of strife and evil beasts.

"For a man's foes are of his own household.

"But scourge thou thence the money-changers and the merchants, lest the house of thy prayer become unto thee a den of thieves."

(9) The Book of Job and the "Odyssey" of Homer are, like the "history" of Israel, parables of the soul's experiences, trials, and ordeals on the same behalf.—E.M.

CHAPTER IX.

"The fire of the soul must be kept alive by the Divine Breath, if it is to live for ever. It must converge, not diverge. If it diverge it will be dissipated. The end of progress is unity; the end of degradation is division. The soul, therefore, which ascends, tends more and more to union with the Divine." This, the final state of the soul, is described in the Apocalypse under the figure of a marriage, wherein the contracting parties are the soul herself and the now divine spirit of the man, which is called the "Lamb." The description of this Lamb as "slain from the foundation of the world," denotes the original and eternal act of self-immolation—typified in the Eucharist—whereby Deity descends into conditions and distributes of itself to be the substance and life of the universe, alike for its creation, its sustentation and its redemption. In the crowning act of this stupendous drama—the act which, mystically, is called the "consummation of the marriage of the Son of God"—the "Spirit and the Bride," as King and Queen of the perfected individuality, are indissolubly united, and the human taken up into the divine, having received the "gift of God," which is life eternal, not merely a gift from God, although God is the giver, but a gift of God's own substantial Self, the infinite and eternal I AM being individuated in him. ⁽¹⁰⁾

The initial and final stages of man's spiritual evolution are indicated by "Paul the mystic" when, read in the interior sense and translated into the eternal now, he says, "He is at first Adam, a living soul," or soul possessing a temporary life; "he is at last Christ, a life-giving spirit," or spirit that is itself divine. "In

⁽¹⁰⁾ This paragraph (from Edward Maitland's MS.) is new in this edition. It was, according to a note of Edward Maitland, "written for 'The Bible's Own Account of Itself,' and omitted for want of space."—S.H.H

the former stage all die; in the latter all live for ever." From this it appears that the Bible sets forth the higher evolution, "new creation" or "redemption" of man, as a dual process occurring simultaneously in his two constituents, himself and his soul; and whereas for the former and masculine moiety the first and last terms are respectively Adam and Christ, for the latter and feminine moiety they are Eve and Mary.

Between these stages there stands, as a half-way house, one which is especially conspicuous in the Bible. This is the stage represented by "David," of whom the Christ is said to be emphatically the son. Here also the rule holds good that no physical reference is intended. The sense in which the Christ is the "son of David," is that in which the elder man is son of the younger. David is the type of the man who, being but partially regenerate, is liable to oscillate between the two extremes of his nature, ascending under the influence of his regenerated part to the heights of spiritual perception and divine communion; and, under the influence of his still unregenerate part, descending to the depths of sensuality and cruelty. Nevertheless, the regenerative or Christ-process, has begun in him, in due time to be completed. And it is because this process when once it has laid hold of the man, never lets him go, but continues to its due issue, it is said that "nothing shall separate him from the love of Christ," and, "Of those who are given to Christ, he loses none." Not that the love that thus saves is all on one side, for the love of Christ means also the love which the man himself has for spiritual perfection, and this of itself is a saviour to him. For it is only in one aspect of the term that Christ denotes a person. It denotes, also, a principle, a process, and a state, all of which are interior to the individual." (1)

And as none of these terms imply actual persons or have any physical import, but refer solely to man in his spiritual capacity, so also, when it is said that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," the reference is in no wise to the physical blood of anyone. For there

(1) See last note.—S.H.H.

is no congruous relation between physical blood-shedding and moral or spiritual guilt; and it is the first essential to sound science in things spiritual, no less than in things physical, to "compare like with like and preserve the affinity of similars." And so far, moreover, from the Divine justice being satisfied by any sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, it would be outraged thereby, if only for the reason that *the Divine justice is just*. Hence, the orthodox doctrine of substitutory sacrifice, or "vicarious atonement," is a blasphemous travesty of the truth. And it is that which, more than any other of the many sacerdotal perversions of religion, has ministered to the degradation of man's conception of God. The worshippers of the letter, singing, as is their wont, their favourite hymn,

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"

in the physical and gross sense of the words, really conceive of the Supreme Being but as the great master-butcher (²). Hence it comes that, grossly blasphemous as may be, and are, many of the utterances of Materialists and Agnostics against Scripture and religion, they are but directed against the orthodox perversions of these, and not against that which is really true and divine. Whereas, orthodoxy, by libelling the Divine character itself, and so making God evil, outdoes the Atheist, who merely denies the existence of God. Since, as Bacon remarks, it is a far less offence to doubt or deny a person's existence than to malign his character. Wherefore there may be more true faith and piety in the very denials of the unbeliever than in the most positive protestations of the professor.

(²) The following recent utterance of one of the most devout of Catholic gentlewomen, "I *hate* God, and but for Jesus and our blessed lady I would have no religion at all," represents a frame of mind far from rare, whether with Catholics or Protestants. It is, however, a notable sign of the times that an Anglican dignitary, Dr. Moorhouse, Bishop of Manchester, in his recent work, "The Dangers of the Apostolic Age," has found grace and courage to denounce the doctrine of the substitutory sacrifice of Christ as "an outrage to his reason and an offence to his conscience."—E.M.

The Christ whose "blood" alone saves is, then, a purely spiritual being, and, consequently, has for his "blood"—"which is the life"—only pure spirit; and it is this same pure spirit in man which saves him. But none the less does the self-sacrifice of the Christ on the outer plane minister to his salvation. For that which really saves is, in all cases, love. And it is the change wrought in men by the spectacle of an all-sacrificing love that redeems them. Hence it comes that they are not forgiven because the Christ dies; but they are changed because he loves. And the atonement is no propitiation made for them by another and from without; but an at-one-ment, or reconciliation, made in them with their own central, highest, and best indwelling spirit, the God within. This, then, and not the orthodox doctrine, is the religion of the Bible and of Christ, whether or not it be that of Christianity. "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, not by the purchase of pardon with another's gold, but because the love of God changes the life of the sinner."

To quote, as do the advocates of the orthodox doctrine, the language of Paul on behalf of their revolting tenet, is to show themselves in the highest degree ignorant, dishonest, or stupid. For Paul expressly guards himself against the mistaking of the physical organism for the spiritual selfhood of Christ by protesting against any longer "knowing Christ after the flesh;" insisting on the "Christ within" as the agent of salvation, and charging his neophytes to "put on Christ."

In his desire to reconcile sacerdotalism with mysticism, Paul employed a mode of expression derived from the former, hoping thereby to de-materialise it and lift it to the spiritual plane. But it is a moral certainty that, had he foreseen the ghastly consequences which would ensue from the acceptance of his language in its literal sense, nothing would have induced him to employ a mode of expression which, by any process of perversion, could be made to re-inforce and perpetuate the system, sacerdotal and sacrificial, of which Jesus had been the victim, and which, like Jesus, he himself sought to supplant.

None the less is sacrifice of Divine appointment. But it is sacrifice as defined by the prophets, not as insisted on by the priests. And so far from the Bible countenancing the latter, it represents throughout its whole course the two orders as in unceasing conflict, making Abel and Christ its first and last types of the former, and Cain and Caiaphas of the latter. Always in its pages is the priest, as the minister to sense, represented as slaying the prophet, as the minister of the intuition. And to this day does orthodoxy side with the Cain, Caiaphas, and priest element in religion and in man to the suppression of the Abel, Christ, and prophet element (3). The sacrifice which is of Divine appointment, that alone which is the true sacrifice of Christ, being the sacrifice whereby the Christ becomes Christ, is the sacrifice of the lower nature in oneself to the higher, and of oneself for others. "Without *such* sacrifice is no remission of sin." For by it, and by it alone, man rises out of his lower nature into his higher, and becomes reconstituted of his constituent principles in their divine, because pure, condition. Wherefore the whole mystery of that which is at once the mystery of regeneration, the "mystery of godliness," the mystery of Christ, and the "secret and method of Christ," consists in interior purification. In such degree as man accomplishes this he becomes "God in the condition of God." For "God is spirit," and there is no impassable boundary between spirit and matter. And, therefore, in the text-books of the Higher Alchemy or science of the perfectionment of man, in our day for the first time in the world's history, permitted to be rendered in plain language and given to the world, it is written in this wise:—

"To make gold, the alchemist must have gold.

"But he knows that to be gold which others take to be dross.

"The Will of God is the alchemic crucible: and the dross which is cast therein is matter.

(3) See, further on this subject, extract from Edward Maitland's letter on "The Church and the Bible," in the Appendix, p. 76.—S.II.II.

“ And the dross shall become pure gold, seven times refined; even perfect spirit.

“ It shall leave behind it nothing: but shall be transformed into the Divine image.....

“ Cast thyself into the will of God, and thou shalt become as God.

“ For thou art God if thy will be the Divine will.

“ This is the great secret: it is the mystery of redemption.”

But no loss of individuality is implied. Though becoming as the One, the many do not cease to be the many. But in them the One becomes the many, and this without ceasing to be the One.

In the above citation is indicated a stage in the process of the Christ, the accomplishment of which is reserved for him who becomes in the fullest sense of the term *a* Christ. All who have, and all who are saved by, Christ must accomplish in their spiritual sense the several “acts” represented by the terms “crucifixion,” “burial,” “resurrection,” and “ascension.” By him who is in the fullest sense *a* Christ, they must be accomplished in their physical sense also. This is to say that, where they must crucify and bury the bodily nature in the spiritual sense, he must do this both physically and spiritually; and where they must put on a “raised” or higher order of body, and with this ascend into the heaven of a perfect doctrine and rule of life, in the spiritual sense, he must do this in both senses, re-animating his physical body after its death, in the event of its succumbing, and finally transmuting it into its original spiritual substance. For only by showing himself to be in his own system that which God is in the universe, omnipotent, can he constitute a full manifestation to humanity of its own Divine potentialities. Doing this he fulfils to the utmost the function of the Christ; which is to be a saviour of men by showing them what they themselves are, and have it in them to become, and how to become it. Accomplishing his resurrection and ascension in the physical sense also, he demonstrates the identity of his will with the supreme will by which, originally, spirit is projected into the condition of matter. Since

only the will that projects can recall. In regard to this aspect of the Christ the recovered Gnosis discourses as follows:—

“There is a power by means of which matter may be ingested into its original substance.

“He who possesses this power is Christ, and he has the devil under foot (4).

“For he reduces chaos to order, and indraws the external to the centre.

“He has learnt that matter is illusion, and that spirit alone is real.

“He has found his own central point: and all power is given unto him in heaven and on earth.....

“Not that matter shall be destroyed.....but it shall be indrawn and resolved into its true self.....

“The body, which is matter, is but the manifestation of spirit: and the Word of God shall transmute it into its inner being.” (5)

(4) The “devil” of the mystical Scriptures is no person, but the negation of God. “All that God is the devil is *not*.” God is pure being, and the devil is his antithesis, being as darkness to light, its negation, and no positive entity. He is thus not “Satan,” but the void without the kosmos, of which Satan—who also is Saturn—represents the seventh and outermost sphere. The first and innermost sphere is represented by the sun (Phoibos) as the “Spirit of Wisdom.” Wherefore Satan, as the “lord of the seventh,” is called the “Spirit of the Fear of the Lord,” which “is the beginning of wisdom,” thus denoting reverence as the first essential qualification for admission into the Divine kingdom, which, when once gained, allows of ascent to the centre and highest by mounting the steps of the “seven days” of creation, which, reversed, are those of regeneration. Wherefore nothing can surpass in importance the functions exercised by Deity under the character of Satan.—E.M.

(5) As the most difficult of all the acts of the soul, the indrawal of the body was the last of the labours assigned by the Greeks to their type of the man regenerate. The lower spheres of the consciousness, the material and astral, were accounted as Hades, or Hell, to the purified soul; and it was the withdrawal of the body from this region that was denoted by the dragging from Hades by Herakles (Hercules) of the “dog” Cerberus, who, with its three heads, denoted the body and its three (true) senses (taste and smell being but modes of touch).—E.M.

CHAPTER X.

UNSYMPATHETIC and, therefore, undiscerning critics are wont to taunt the Hebrews with being but clumsy inventors of myths and parables. Whereas the truth is that their ingenuity in this direction was so transcendent that their inventions have been taken as intended historically, and no search has been made for further explanation of them. Such criticism has resulted from the failure to see that, inasmuch as the soul and nothing but the soul must be the standpoint and theme of a Bible, the soul and nothing but the soul must be the standpoint and key of the Bible. As already shown, the soul is usually personified in the Bible as a woman, and it is in this guise that she constantly appears, either explicitly or implicitly, as the spiritual guide and guardian of man.

Thus, as Rahab—whose vocation denotes her a soul still in commerce with matter, being as yet unpurified and made “virgin”—it is the soul’s intuition that facilitates the entrance of Israel into the promised land. As Jael, her spiritual perceptions deal a death-blow to the lower nature by piercing its representative Sisera—the captain-general of the “Canaanites”—in the forehead, thus denoting the intellect, which of itself is powerless against insight. It is the soul, as denoted by a brook, or stream of living water, that elaborates and provides the “smooth stones” of a doctrine perfect and inexpugnable, wherewith David discomfits the giant champion of the Philistines, smiting him also on the forehead to denote the reason as the unbeliever’s weak point. It is the soul again who, as Esther, the principle of intuitive perception and true interpretation, rescues the true religion, represented by her people, from fatal deterioration through the machinations of Haman, or the tendency to materiality in respect of spiritual things, having first gained favour with the genius of the age as denoted by the king,

which had already deposed orthodoxy as represented by Vashti.

And it was from the quarries of the soul that the "stone" was "cut without hands"—the "philosopher's stone" of a perfect system of thought and rule of life—which destroyed the image of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, and became a "great mountain and filled the whole earth." For the image was the symbol of that system, purely materialistic, which represents an intellect, indeed, of gold, but whose feet are of clay and iron, in that it rests solely on matter and force, rejecting outright the ideas of God, the soul, and moral responsibility. And since such are precisely the "stone" and the "image" now arrayed against each other as never before in the world's history; and as, moreover, the book which records this vision contains also a positive announcement that, after a period which—according to the most luminous expositors—coincides exactly with the present epoch, the "seals shall be broken and the books opened," and the perfect doctrine be disclosed, it may well be that some who are now living will see the existing materialistic system in Church, State, and Society, miscalled Civilisation, shattered to pieces and cast to the winds, and the "stone," its destroyer, become a "great mountain and fill the whole earth." Thus accepted at length as the solution of the problem at once of God and man, it will prove itself to be in very truth the "head cornerstone" of the pyramid of the perfect humanity, so long "rejected of the builders" of the Babels innumerable of systems merely intellectual, which—one and all—have but ministered to and ended in confusion.

The faculty of intuitional perception is symbolised also by the ass, the appropriateness of that animal for such purpose consisting in its surefootedness, sagacity and unpretentiousness, and the long-suffering it exhibits under the harsh and contemptuous treatment usually accorded to it. It bears on its back, moreover, the mark of a cross. As emblematising the intuition it has a conspicuous place in the blessing pronounced by Jacob on his son Judah, wherein the description of the Shiloh, or Messiah, as "binding his foal to the

vine, even his ass's colt to the choice vine," implies the attainment of the full intuition which is the condition of Christhood, as resulting only from the intimate and sure union between the soul and the divine spirit. For the same reason it is said of Sion that "her king cometh riding on an ass's colt"; and the Christ is represented as making his entry into the holy city "sitting on an ass." The other instance in which Jacob refers to an ass when blessing his sons, that of Issachar, implies a failure of the intuition, corresponding to that of Eve, which caused the fall and subjection of both Eve and Issachar. Both saw that the proffered object was "pleasant," and both succumbed to the sense-nature. As that in man which discerns the angel, the intuition is the ass that arrests the course of the perverse Balaam, pleading its past faithful service against his distrust and ill-usage. And it is the same faculty that, under the designation of the jawbone of an ass, enables Samson to confute and discomfit the Philistines. And—to cite but one of the several remaining examples—so paramount was the importance attached to the possession of a pure intuition, that one of the very first charges laid by Moses upon the Israelites after the Exodus, was to "break the neck of the firstling of an ass, unless it was redeemed with a lamb," the latter denoting a pure spirit. The danger of trusting to the intuition unless so allied, appears in the indubitable fact that just as an unpurified intellect lands its possessor in materialism, so does an unpurified intuition land its possessor in superstition. (6)

Now, according to the Bible no less than to reason, the problem of the ego in man is the problem also of God in the universe; not of God prior to, apart from, or independently of the universe, but *in* the universe. For these two egos are complementary and supplementary to each other. Both must be, or neither can be. Man cannot get out of the universe that which is not in it. If there is no universal ego, there can be no individual ego. If there is no individual ego, the universal can find no manifestation, and, therefore, can have no

(6) See note, p. 42.

being, since that which *is* is bound to find manifestation. Wherefore the being of either ego involves that of both. Nevertheless, it is impossible to conceive of the same universe comprising two true egos, or, rather, the conception would involve a contradiction of terms by substituting a *duiverse* for a *universe*—a thing incompatible with stability. The Bible solves the problem by making the two one and the same, and that one Christ. Christ is for it the perfected ego, and therein God, at once in the individual and in the universal. Doing which it recognises both a microcosmic and a macrocosmic Christ; or, rather, Christ under two aspects, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic.

Recondite as this may appear, the explanation is simple. The individual human ego is an essence compounded of the innumerable associated consciousnesses, or "spirits," of the individual human system; which ego, in its regenerate and perfected state, is called Christ. Similarly, Christ, in the aspect now under consideration, as macrocosmic and universal, is an agglomerated personality composed of the innumerable associated spirits of all perfected human egos throughout the universe. And whereas each of these is a microcosmic individuation of Deity—or God made man in the particular—so the being in whom they converge and combine to form one vast perfected selfhood is the macrocosmic individuation of Deity—or God made man in the universal. This is to say that the microcosmic Christ is God individuated *in* man, and the macrocosmic Christ is God individuated *through* man. And whereas in the trinity of the Unmanifest—or God prior to and apart from creation—"the Father and Son are," as the Creed has it, "co-equal and co-eternal"; in the trinity of the Manifest "The Father," as Jesus says, "is greater than the Son." For the Manifest never exhausts the Unmanifest.

Now, the individual ego, thus composed of the associated consciousness of its system, is not limited in capacity to the sum-total of these, but represents them fused into a unity and polarised to a plane indefinitely higher. Similarly, the universal ego, who is constituted of the spirits, and therefore *is the spirit*, of all

regenerated human egos gathered from every orb in the universe, is not limited to the sum-total of these his component consciousnesses, but represents them fused into a unity and polarised to a plane indefinitely higher. And from this plane, as a sun of suns, in the heaven of heavens, like the individual ego in its system, he re-distributes of that which he has received, yet further enhanced and intensified, to the universe over which he presides.

It is to this aspect and mode of the Christ that Paul refers when he speaks of all redeemed souls as finally "built up as members to constitute the body of Christ," each having its fitting place therein. For, as the "Father's house," there are in it "many mansions." Such is the corporate association variously called by mystics the "Grand Man," the "Celestial Hierarchy," and the "Church Invisible and Triumphant." And such is the state concerning which Paul writes: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (7)

In these words of Paul is contained the vindication of our contention, that the system of the Bible realises an ideally perfect conception of religion. For to make love for God the means of salvation is to make the attainment of perfection the result of the desire for perfec-

(7) The state here referred to is not to be confounded with that called by modern "Spiritualists" the "summer land," or with aught of which, as Spiritualists, they have cognisance. Their experiences, in so far as they are genuine, are restricted to the spheres astral, magnetic, and purgatorial, which are extraneous to the individual; whereas the reference here is to the spheres celestial and divine of souls perfected and passed on, having attained the "twofold state" wherein they consist exclusively of soul and spirit, having shed every vestige of materiality, and become, therefore, as said in the Apocalypse, "pure virgins." But, though thus far removed from the earth-plane, this state is not inaccessible to those who are still on that plane; but the access to it is within, by way of the soul. Hence it is beyond the ken of the mere "lucid" or clairvoyant.

It is of the state here referred to—a state altogether sublime—that the doctrine of "Biunity," lately put forward by persons possessing a smattering of occultism and a spurious spirituality is a travesty.—E.M.

tion, and of the consequent endeavour to realise it. It is in this endeavour that man gradually but surely becomes reconstituted of higher because purer modes of his substance, until at length he is re-made of it in its original divine condition. For, as is essential to be understood, all substance is *thought-substance*, and amenable, therefore, to the will of the individual constituted of it. So that man actually makes himself according to his thoughts and desires and the tendencies encouraged by him in himself (8). To say which is simply to say that in the world substantial, no less than in the world phenomenal, cause and effect are invariable, and the Divine Justice inexorable. Hence it is that, to realise the ideal, man must desire, cherish, and practise the ideal. No matter how low at the outset may be his standard or feeble his will. He may be at the very foot of the ladder of incarnation, "sleeping" with Jacob on the "stone" which, representing the mineral stage of the consciousness in respect of things spiritual, may yet be "raised up" to be of the "children of Abraham." Or, like the Prodigal, he may be sharing contentedly with "swine" the "husks" of mere materiality. But when, turning from these, he discerns and desires a better than he has or is, and proves his sincerity by making serious and persistent endeavour to attain and to become it, by that very thought and act he "comes to himself," his true and real self, and plants his foot on the ladder of his spiritual evolution, which, reaching as it does "from the dust of the ground to the throne of the Most High," will in due course take him to his proper home, the "Father's house," proving itself to be in very truth

(8) In a review of some works on Hypnotism, the *Lancet* says (March 28th, 1891, p. 722): "It is quite impossible to assign any limitation to the influence of mind upon body; which is probably much more potent and far-reaching than we are usually prepared to admit." This is but one of numerous instances in which modern science finds itself compelled, in respect of its very foundations, to revert to that of a remote antiquity. To allow, as Professor Clifford allowed, that "matter must have a little feeling," is really to fall back on a universal consciousness as the sole real being.—E.M.

a "tree of life." Jesus, by his recognition of this self and the power to realise it, as subsisting within man, gives the lie direct to the orthodox doctrines of total depravity and of salvation as coming from without; and sets his seal to the Hermetic definition, that man has within himself the seed of his own regeneration and the power to effectuate it. And inasmuch as it is by the pursuit of the ideal, as discerned by the soul, that the Christ becomes Christ, that which is called the "finding of Christ" is no other than the completion of the Intuition and realisation of the Ideal. It is with the steps of the process of such becoming that the Bible, as a Bible, is mainly occupied. For its history of man from Adam to Jesus is no other than the history of the elaboration of man's spiritual selfhood. And that Jesus was adopted as the typical representative of this selfhood is because, at a crisis in the world's spiritual history closely corresponding to that which now is, those who, being at once mystics and gnostics, were possessed of the requisite faculty and knowledge, and were divinely charged with the reformulation anew of religion on the basis of this selfhood as the "Immanuel," or God *within* man, recognised in him the most advanced soul and perfect initiate of that or of any other period, and therefore as one in whom the process of the Christ—the process, that is, of regeneration had attained its fullest development, and this by the method accounted the highest, being that which is from within outwards.

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CHAPTER XI.

IT will be well, before concluding, to give an instance at length of the kind of interpretation of which the Bible is not only susceptible, but on which it insists as indispensable to the true understanding of it. The instance proposed is the interpretation of that which the Bible recounts in the form of a history, as the indispensable preliminary to and condition of the soul's emancipation and final perfectionment. This is the mystic Exodus from the mystic Egypt, the Exodus of the soul from the power of the body, as rendered in a hymn which, alike for the light it casts on the intention and method of Scripture, for its intrinsic beauty, and for the manner of its recovery (9), is altogether excellent, and well worthy to be accounted one of "the precious things brought forth by the moon," as said

(9) The story of the recovery of this hymn is told in "The Life of Anna Kingsford," referred to in the preface to this edition. Mr. Maitland there says: "The method [of its recovery] was such as to constitute it a proof positive of the great doctrine set forth in it, the doctrine of Reincarnation; for it was as one of a band of initiates, making solemn procession through the aisles of a vast Egyptian temple, chanting it in chorus, that Mary [Anna Kingsford], being asleep, recollected it" (Vol. I., p. 456). And, in the letter before referred to, sent on the 22nd September, 1891, for publication in the *Agnostic Journal*, Edward Maitland says:—"This Hymn is neither an original composition nor a translation from any existing known literature, but one of a series of similar recollections, recovered principally in sleep, by my late collaborator Dr. Anna Kingsford, of knowledges acquired in a previous incarnation, when an initiate of the ancient Egyptian Mysteries; such recovery having been expressly vouchsafed under the control of the Church Invisible—with which, as an extraordinary advanced soul, she was in open conditions and

in Deuteronomy of the products of the intuition, of which the "moon," or "Isis," is the symbol. For it is one of those rituals which, long before they were appropriated to the service of the Bible, were wont to be chanted in chorus by the initiates of the sacred mysteries of Egypt, Greece, and, who shall say, of how many other lands? as they made procession through the aisles of their mighty temples, solemn yet joyous, as—to use Plutarch's expression—"knowing themselves to be immortal." For they knew, as all who are truly initiated know, having the witness in themselves, that immortality means, not the doubtful boon of the mere continuance of life, but the inestimable blessing of a larger, fuller, richer, higher, nobler—in a word, of a divine life. For not theirs was the self-induced blight of that utter lack of the imagination, scientific or other, which incapacitates the intellectual representatives of this age from perceiving—for the imagination is, in its true function, a perceptive rather than a creative faculty—that this stupendous universe not only *must have*, but *actually has*, possibilities which the brief, meagre, painful, and incomplete life of the earth and the body cannot even begin to exhaust, and for which, therefore, the present life is but a preparation and a prelude.

To render our hymn fully intelligible, it is necessary to premise as follows. By Iacchos, to whom it is addressed, is meant life in its highest degree, spiritual life, the term being identical with the Hebrew Jah, or

full communion—in fulfilment of the prophecies which indicate the present time as that of the 'end of the world' in the sense of materiality and agnosticism in respect of things spiritual and divine."

The "series of similar recollections" above referred to constitute "the essential portions of that ancient divine gnosis, or knowledge, which was the foundation of all the sacred mysteries, scriptures, and religions of antiquity, Christianity included, and with the taking away of the key of which Jesus so bitterly reproached, in the ecclesiasticism of his time, that of all time. The recovery comprises also rituals, hymns, and expositions, from which the Bible writers largely derived both their doctrine and their diction." (Letter of Edward Maitland in *A. J.* of 15th Sept., 1894).—S.H.H.

Iach, which means life, and of whom, personified, it is said in the Psalms, "Praise Him by His name Iah." The name Jacob is a form of the same, and hence the expression in the Psalms, "the mighty God Jacob," and the import of the "allegory," as Paul calls it, of the prenatal struggle between Jacob and his "brother" Esau, whom, as denoting the bodily life only, God is said to "hate"; but who, as the first to be manifested, is called the elder. While Jacob, whom God is said to "love," denotes the spiritual life, which, though last to be manifested as belonging to a later and higher stage of man's evolution, is really the elder in the divine idea and intention, and the rightful heir, and is, therefore, represented as proving his superiority by its superior subtlety.

The other name of Iacchos, Dionysos, corresponds to Jehovah-Nissi of the Hebrews. And while Iacchos, or Dionysos, is the God at once of the body and of the planet having his place, like the earth, third from the sun, and called—as by Isaiah—the Spirit of Power, Hermes, as the Spirit of Understanding and second of the creative Elohim, has his place next the sun, his planet being Mercury, by which name he is called by the Latins. That Hermes is, in our hymn, called the redeemer is because it is through the understanding of divine things that man is alone able to achieve his redemption. The name, which signifies both rock and interpreter, implies that the rock on which the true Church is built is neither a person nor a spirit of credulity, however devout, but the understanding. Like the Hebrew Raphael, to whom he corresponds, Hermes is called also the physician of souls, in token that a right understanding of divine things is indispensable to the soul's health and welfare. From all of which it is clear that, in making the man "Peter" its "rock," and not the spirit of understanding who prompted the confession of Peter, the Church materialised the verity implied, thereby concealing it from view until it was lost. And, so far from "Peter" fulfilling his proper function as interpreter by opening the ears of the faithful to the understanding of divine things, he—as represented by the Church—has to this day

continued to repeat the act for which he was rebuked by Jesus—that of cutting off the ear, as by forbidding inquiry and withholding the interpretation of the doctrines of religion; until it has come, as by a righteous Nemesis, that the Church itself has lost the knowledge both of the source and of the signification of its own dogmas; and, as declared by Cardinal Newman, the only hope for religion lies in a new revelation.

“Israel,” as the soul, is the seeker after salvation through spiritual perfection. “Egypt,” as has already been stated, stands for the body; the “corn in Egypt” for the nourishment, experiences, discipline, and so forth, requisite for the soul’s sustenance and education. “Evoi” means hail! And the standpoint of the poem is that of a man, when about to become again incarnate on earth for the further accomplishment of his regeneration, admonishing his soul concerning the dangers before them and the way of escape:—

HYMN TO THE PLANET-GOD.

“Evoi, Iacchos, Lord of the Sphinx: who linkest the lowest to the highest; the loins of the wild beast to the head and breast of the woman.

“Thou holdest the chalice of divination: all the forms of nature are reflected therein.

“Thou turnest man to destruction: then thou sayest, Come again, ye children of my hand.

“Yea, blessed and holy art thou, O Master of Earth: Lord of the cross and of the tree of salvation.

“Vine of God, whose blood redeemeth; bread of heaven, broken on the altar of death.

“There is corn in Egypt; go thou down into her, O my soul, with joy.

“For in the kingdom of the body thou shalt eat the bread of thine initiation.

“But beware lest thou become subject to the flesh, and a bond-slave in the land of thy sojourn.

“Serve not the idols of Egypt; and let not the senses be thy taskmasters.

“For they will bow thy neck to their yoke; they

will bitterly oppress the Israel of God.

"An evil time shall come upon thee; and the Lord shall smite Egypt with plagues for thy sake.

"Thy body shall be broken on the wheel of God; thy flesh shall see trouble and the worm.

"Thy house shall be smitten with grievous plagues; blood, and pestilence, and great darkness; fire shall devour thy goods; and thou shalt be a prey to the locust and creeping thing.

"Thy glory shall be brought down to the dust; hail and storm shall smite thine harvest; yea, thy beloved and thy first-born shall the hand of the Lord destroy;

"Until the body let the soul go free; that she may serve the Lord God.

"Arise in the night, O soul, and fly, lest thou be consumed in Egypt.

"The angel of the understanding shall know thee for his elect, if thou offer unto God a reasonable faith.

"Savour thy reason with learning, with labour, and with obedience.

"Let the rod of thy desire be in thy right hand; put the sandals of Hermes on thy feet; and gird thy loins with strength.

"Then shalt thou pass through the waters of cleansing, which is the first death in the body.

"The waters shall be a wall unto thee on thy right hand and on thy left.

"And Hermes the redeemer shall go before thee; for he is thy cloud of darkness by day, and thy pillar of fire by night.

"All the horsemen of Egypt and the chariots thereof; her princes, her counsellors, and her mighty men:

"These shall pursue thee, O soul, that fliest; and shall seek to bring thee back into bondage.

"Fly for thy life; fear not the deep; stretch out thy rod over the sea; and lift thy desire unto God.

"Thou hast learnt wisdom in Egypt; thou hast spoiled the Egyptians; thou hast carried away their fine gold and their precious things.

"Thou hast enriched thyself in the body; but the body shall not hold thee; neither shall the waters of the deep swallow thee up.

"Thou shalt wash thy robes in the sea of regeneration; the blood of atonement shall redeem thee to God.

"This is thy chrism and anointing, O soul; this is the first death; thou art the Israel of the Lord,

"Who hath redeemed thee from the dominion of the body, and hath called thee from the grave, and from the house of bondage,

"Unto the way of the Cross, and to the path in the midst of the wilderness;

"Where are the adder and the serpent, the mirage and the burning sand.

"For the feet of the saint are set in the way of the desert.

"But be thou of good courage, and fail thou not; then shall thy raiment endure, and thy sandals shall not wax old upon thee.

"And thy desire shall heal thy diseases; it shall bring streams for thee out of the stony rock; it shall lead thee to Paradise.

"Evoi, Father Iacchos, Jehovah-Nissi; Lord of the garden and of the vineyard;

"Initiator and lawgiver; God of the cloud and of the mount.

"Evoi, Father Iacchos; out of Egypt hast thou called thy Son." ⁽¹⁰⁾

(10) The "garden" implies the condition of purity; the "vineyard," the culture of a pure spirit in man; the "cloud," the place from which the divine voice within man utters itself; the "mount," the "hill of regeneration" or "mount of the Lord" within man; so-called from its representing that process of ascent inwards and upwards towards his highest and best, by means of which he becomes regenerate or "twice-born," and thereby divine. And to be "consumed" implies the process of wasting away which the soul undergoes by deprivation of its proper spiritual sustenance.—E.M.

CHAPTER XII.

IF now it be asked, as it well may and ought to be asked, what—at least in the judgment of the writer—are the precise significance and destined issue of the work represented by this exposition, the reply may best be rendered in the language of the great poet, himself a foremost champion of freedom, John Milton. Said Milton concerning a crisis which, momentous though it was, pales in presence of that which now is, seeing that religion and the soul themselves were in no wise menaced: “Now once again, by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of devout and holy men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is beginning to devise some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself. What does He then but address Himself to His servants, and—as His manner is—first to His Englishmen.”⁽¹¹⁾ To which may be added, in reference to our own day, “and having, by the hand of His Agnostics, beaten down the false interpretation of His holy Word, is about, by the hand of His Mystics, to establish the true, even to the Christianising of Christianity itself.”

(11) Milton, it is clear, recognised in his countrymen that certain quality of soul which, in spite of many and grievous limitations—rivalling even those of Israel—has led to their being regarded as fulfilling in the modern world a function corresponding to that of Israel in the ancient world—the witness among the nations for God, the soul, and the moral conscience.—E.M.

The recital of the grounds for this judgment will form an appropriate conclusion to these chapters by its interpretation at once of Bible prophecy and of the meaning of the age. For the event is one to which Scripture points in no doubtful terms as constituting the "end," which is that, not of an age or dispensation only, but of "the world," meaning not the physical planet, but the world in the Church; the end of worldliness, or materiality, in the interpretation of things spiritual; and the "coming of the kingdom of God," or perfect doctrine and rule of life which shall realise the "new heavens and new earth" of all divinely-inspired prophets and poets. Such, too, is the end of that "generation" which, for the illicit intercourse of its soul with matter, is called by Jesus "adulterous," and the token of the approach of which was declared by him as by Daniel—to be the recognition of the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place"—namely, the exaltation of matter to the place of God and the soul, as the all-in-all of being. And the token was no other than the restoration of spiritual perception, precisely such as is now occurring. It was not the erection or presence of the "abomination" in the holy place—it had been there all along, before and after Jesus, as it always is under a rule exclusively sacerdotal and uncorrected by prophetic insight—but the recognition of its presence. *When ye shall see*, then is the end near, even at the doors—a truth which holds good alike for the individual and the general. For the opening of the spiritual vision, and this alone, is the death-blow to materiality.

Hence the significance also of that other sign specified by Jesus, the budding of the fig-tree. From time immemorial the fig has been the mystical symbol for the soul as the feminine principle in man, having been selected to this end because, while it is in the similitude of the ungravid matrix, it bears its blossoms interiorly, in darkness and concealment, as does the soul herself, and thus represents those truths which, being interior, mystic, spiritual, are discernible only by a special spirit of understanding. Hence the assignment to Hermes, the "angel of the Understanding,"

of the fig-branch as his especial symbol. And hence also the import of the curse pronounced by Jesus on the barren fig-tree. And as by that allegory is implied his recognition of the utter blight that had come upon man's inward understanding; so, by his indication of the budding of the fig-tree as the sign of the time of the end, he implied the restoration of that understanding, and therewith of the esoteric and spiritual sense of that of which the exoteric and superficial sense only had been recognised, and consequently the advent of a gospel of interpretation representing the "taking away of the old to establish the new"; of the letter to establish the spirit.

It is to the same period and event also that Jesus refers when he says that "in those days many shall come from the East and the West and the North and the South, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." For, in their secret aspect, these names are the Jewish equivalents for Brahma, Isis, and Iacchos, to denote the sacred mysteries, respectively, of India, Egypt, and Greece, and therein of the spirit, the soul, and the body—the last comprehending the mind—which together comprise the whole man, and constitute that perfect doctrine and practice which is called in the Bible the "Law and the Prophets," of which the Christ, as man perfected, is the fulfilment, and the condition resulting therefrom is the "kingdom of heaven." For heaven is not a place, but a condition, that wherein the whole man is reconciled and "at-oned," being pervaded and ruled throughout his whole system by one and the same will, and this the divine will. The kosmos thus ordered is, whether on the plane of the physical or of the spiritual, whether individual or collective, a "kingdom of God."

Such are the "mysteries" which are now everywhere being eagerly sought after and inquired into, and which, in response to man's earnest cravings, are being restored; and this, not alone by means of the ordinary methods of research, but by actual re-delivery from their original divine source and perpetual depository, the "Church Invisible" as already defined; their

restoration being rendered possible by precisely that process of "at-onement" already described. And so it has come that at the very moment when the representative intellects of the age—this materialistic, idolatrous, and, therefore, "adulterous" generation—were congratulating themselves on having demonstrated to their own satisfaction the utter baselessness of the ideas of God, the soul, and moral responsibility, of inspiration, revelation, and immortality, and were eagerly anticipating the time when mankind at large would share their enlightenment—the world has, to their perplexity and dismay, like the prodigal of old, suddenly "come to itself," and, declining any longer to share with "swine" the husks of materiality so insidiously prepared for it, has set itself in good earnest to "return to the Father's house"; leaving its whilom teachers no resource but to think it has all at once gone mad, since they find in their own narrow and false philosophy no room for the facts of which the world has become aware.

The wise of old, however, knew better, and notably those to whose wisdom the world's genuine scriptures are due. For it is no other than precisely such sublimation as that described above, of the human will, and its unification with the divine, together with the results thereof, which—in that least understood of the books, all of which have been misunderstood, the "Revelation of John the Divine"—are spoken of as the "drying up of the great river Euphrates that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared." For, as in the opening, so in the closing of the Bible, by the "Euphrates" is denoted that supreme element in the fourfold kosmos of human nature, the Spirit or Will. And with this "dried up" in the manner described, there is no longer any impediment to the passage of those who, under their mystical title of "kings of the East," are ever the heralds and bringers-in of the perfect day. No mere persons are these in their supreme aspect, be their corresponding manifestation on the world-plane what it may. They are man's own essential principles, his spirit, his soul, and his mind, operating each in its loftiest mode, as Right Aspira-

tion, Right Perception, and Right Judgment. Of and by these alone is the knowledge of divine realities. And in such degree as these are cherished and exercised man attains to that true and only real orthodoxy, the orthodoxy of the Church Invisible, of which, for want of them, that of the Church Visible has hitherto been so grievous a perversion, distortion, and mutilation (1).

The same book forecasts the same event when it tells how, after "lying dead in the streets of the great city wherein the Lord was crucified" for the mystic "time, times, and a half time," God's two witnesses shall be resuscitated, stand up on their feet, and ascend into heaven. For the great city is no other than the world's materialistic system in Church, State, and Society, wherein perpetually the Lord, as the Christ in man or divinity in humanity, is crucified. And God's two witnesses, who have so long lain dead in this city, are no other than the "two great lights" of the fourth day of man's spiritual creation, the Intellect and Intuition, which represent, respectively, man's mind and soul, and, as the "man" and "woman" of his mental system, are, when duly purified and conjoined, the parents of the divine child, Truth, and God's witnesses, therefore, on earth. And these are now at length rising from the death to which they have been done by the dominant orthodoxies of religion and science, and already are standing on their feet, preparatory to their ascent to the heaven of their proper sovereignty over the world.

That such assemblage from the East and the West and the North and the South—that is, of all sorts and conditions of persons—to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; such drying up of the great river of man's will, and pas-

(1) "The East" is a term used in the Bible to denote the source of spiritual light within man. "The glory of God," says Ezekiel, "came from the East." And it is by the dwellers "in the East" that the "star" of the new-born divine humanity is ever discerned. For, like other mystical expressions, it denotes, not a place, but a condition.—E.M.

sage of the kings of the East; and such resurrection and ascension into power of God's two witnesses on earth, are now actually in process, there are for the percipient and heedful, who, through the long night of the prevailing winter solstice of the soul, have—as spiritual shepherds—kept faithful watch over the flocks of their own pure intuitions, and caught the first gleams upon their mountains of the beautiful feet of the messengers of the dawn of the coming regeneration, many and indubitable signs to show. The urgency of the world's need, and the keenness of its sense of its need; the eager receptivity of its condition; the unparalleled wrath of the dragon of negation as in view of the shortness of his time; the fierceness of the war in heaven, or intellectual conflict now raging between the dragon and his angels of darkness, as the champions of materiality, and Michael and his angels of light—"that great prince which standeth for the children of God's people"—as the champions of spirituality; and, above all, the transcendency of the response already vouchsafed in the new gospel of interpretation represented by these chapters; these are among the signs which warrant confident hope that the spiritual consciousness of the race is at length in actual course of its long-promised promotion to a new level of perception and a higher than any yet attained save by the most advanced of its sons, even to the realisation of that which, mystically, is called the "second advent of Christ," and the "coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." The recognition, spiritual and intellectual, that is, of the essential divinity of humanity, and its issue in the practical recognition of the brother-and-sister-hood of man, as alone such relationship is conceivable or possible, through the Father-and-Mother-hood of God.

Meanwhile, to those who, ignoring or defying the signs of the times, and—remaining Materialist or Agnostic—elect to abide without the precincts of the holy city now coming down from the heaven of a pure ideal, and persist in doing further battle for their cherished negations, heaping contumely upon the Mystic and the

Book he *intelligently* reveres, as by emptying upon them the vials of a criticism as shallow and pointless as it is flippant and coarse—to these the two following considerations are commended:—(1) That the only things of which any criticism is an unerring criterion are the character, capacity, and level of the critic himself. And (2) that, whatever their grievance against the Mystic, it is as nought in comparison with his grievance against them. For, while they have systematically made him, his methods, and his results a byword and a scoff, and—by their assertion of the impossibility of knowledge and immortality—have denied to him, no less than to themselves, the right to a mind and soul; he, returning good for evil, has never failed to accord them the same divine potentialities which he claims for himself; and has deemed no sacrifice too great that might qualify him, when descending for their sake from the Mount of his own soul's elevation to those “lowermost parts of the earth,” the “Hades” of the consciousnesses merely physical and astral of which their spirits are “in prison” and fast “bound beneath the altar,” to preach to them by the personal demonstration of his own example that which they also have it in them to become.

For, whatever may be the actual grade and endowments of any individual mystic, he is—in virtue of the evolution in him of that which constitutes him mystic, his consciousness of the reality of the spiritual and its transcendency over the material—of the order to which have belonged all the world's sages, saints, seers, prophets, redeemers, and Christs, and in them of all those to whom man owes it that he has been at all withheld from sinking into hopeless perdition in the bottomless pit of his own lower nature. These they are who have been alone genuine Freethinkers, free-livers, and radical reformers. For, while they gave the utmost range to thought in every direction open to thought from the lowest to the highest; and, masters instead of slaves of their own lower elements, have discarded conventions for principles, and expediencies for right, they have sought to reform, not institutions

merely, but men themselves, and not by precept merely, but by example, making themselves first, regardless of the cost to themselves, that which they would have others to be. And, while reaching thus the highest grades of their order, perfecting themselves according as they gave themselves to perfect others, and becoming in the process, one a prophet and another a redeemer, they have seen their order, and in it Humanity, culminate, by the conjunction of these two offices in the Christ. For "to be prophet and redeemer in one, this is the glory of the Christ."

THE END.



APPENDIX.

The following Letter on the Trinity, the original M.S. of which is in my possession, was written by Edward Maitland for publication in the A.J. Whether it was published or not, I have not been able to ascertain. S.H.H.

11th October, 1891.

I am no stickler for the integrity of the text of the Bible as we have it; but I think I can show cause not merely for an arrest, but for a reversal of the judgment which ascribes forgery or chicanery, whether to its writers or its copiers, on the strength of the alleged interpolation in I John, v. 7, of the words: "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." For the explanation that commends itself to me is that it is in reality a *restoration* made by some copyist who, either from having had access to some earlier MS. not now extant, or from his knowledge of the ancient mysteries to which the doctrine of the Trinity belonged, or by reason of his own perception of the necessary truth of that doctrine and consequent recognition of the passage as it stood as incomplete without it, accordingly made insertion of it, either in the text or in the margin, of his own MS., from which last, if made there, it was, by some subsequent copyist, transferred to the text, all in perfect good faith.

But be this as it may, not only does its presence there make no addition to the doctrine of the Bible, but the tenet itself needs no adventitious support of authority to entitle it to acceptance. For, while it underlies and pervades the Bible from beginning to end, whether explicitly or implicitly, it is founded so

indefeasibly in the very nature of Being, both unmanifest and manifest, original and derived, as to constitute a truth at once necessary and self-evident, for all who, being thinkers in any worthy sense of the term, have made the nature of Being the subject of their thought.

For, as explained in "The Bible's Own Account of Itself," it is impossible to conceive of any entity which is not a duality and a trinity as well as a unity. Since, be it what it may, it must—to be at all—consist of the three elements, Force, Substance, and the resultant Expression or Phenomenon of these. And only by such evolution of their Trinity can the Force and Substance of any entity find recognition, since they cannot themselves become manifest. These, then, are the "three persons" in every being which together make one being. For while the Force in any entity is Being, the Substance is Being, and the Phenomenon is Being: they are not three beings, but one being. And they all are co-equal and co-eternal, and none is before or after the other. And inasmuch as the two first, Force and Substance, are respectively of masculine and feminine potency, they are as He and She to each other, and are Father and Mother in respect of the being concerned; while their immediate resultant, product, expression or "Word" is the child or "Son."

It is true that this is not the ecclesiastical Trinity, but the two presentations differ only by reason of their referring to different stages of thought. By blending what are really inseparable, the "Father" and "Mother," or Force and Substance, into one, and calling this the "Father," the ecclesiastical presentation makes the Father-Mother the first person; their product, expression and manifestation, the "Son," the second person; and takes into the Godhead as third person the divine Force and Substance which proceed, necessarily, through the Son, calling the person thus constituted and derived the "Holy Ghost," or Spirit; this last implying Deity dynamic or active, as distinguished from Deity static, or passive. So that the three names, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are simply terms which denote respectively, the first, Original Being at rest; the last, Original Being in opera-

tion; and the second and middle, Original Being in transition from the former to the latter state. Or, expressed in terms of logic, the first person is the Subject; the third person is the Object; and the second person is the Eject, which—generated of the Subject (the Father-Mother) —is the middle term between this and the Object, or third term, namely, the Holy Ghost, who is, at first potentially, then actually, the manifested universe. For of them all things consist, in them all things live and move and have their being; and “of His fullness have we all received,” Holy Ghost being the term whereby Scripture designates Original Force and Substance—Father and Mother—under manifestation, differentiation and individuation in Creation. And that the Original Force and Substance of Being are designated by terms implying Personality is because, in consisting of essential Consciousness, which is the *condition* of personality, and possessing Will and Intelligence, which are also *conditions* of personality, Deity is necessarily, in such sense, a Person. There is, also, necessarily, but one Original Being, and one law, will, or mind by which that Being works and operates, how many and various soever the planes of His manifestation. From which it follows that there is, between such planes, a correspondence in virtue of which whatever subsists on the one, subsists also, in some mode, on the others. And whereas the “heavenly,” or invisible, is the original, and therefore the highest, this constitutes the “Pattern in the Mount” from and after which all the others are derived and fashioned, and which, itself, though invisible, may be “clearly seen and understood by the things which are made,” as, says Paul, following and reinforcing the Kabala. And it is precisely because “there are three that bear record in heaven,” or the invisible and original, “and these three are one,” that “there are three that bear witness in earth,” or the visible and derived, “and these three agree in one.” And this law holds good, not in respect only of human and other animated beings, but for every entity whatsoever. For everything is a trinity in unity, in that it consists, in some mode, of Father, Mother, and Child, or Father-

Mother, Child and Effect, according to the method of formulation adopted.

The terms, "Spirit," "Water," and "Blood," as used in the passage concerned, similarly denote the constituent principles of the Christ considered as the regenerated selfhood. They are respectively, his Energy or Life, which is his Father; his Substance or Soul, which is his Mother; and their joint product, offspring, expression, Word or Son, which is Himself. Not, be it noted, his physical and phenomenal, but his spiritual and substantial, self, who is necessarily co-substantial with his Father-Mother, the esoteric Christ, or "Christ within," the revelation and exposition of whom was the special function of Paul. It is the "heavenly man," or "man from heaven," by the generation of whom in the earthly man, to be his new and Divine Self, he is redeemed, perfected, sanctified, and finally glorified, the whole process being accomplished by means of that inward purification and at-one-ment which constitute the secret and method of Christ.

The effect of the mistake made by the Churches in this regard has been to turn the profoundest of theosophies into the grossest of idolatries. The Christ proper is no unique, unthinkable personage of hybrid birth and disorderly generation. He is the fulfilment, not the subversion, of the divine-natural order, the realisation of the divine potentialities common to all men. For, every man's Spirit becoming pure, becomes Holy Ghost. Every man's Soul becoming pure, becomes Virgin Mary. And every man himself, by steadfastly following his highest ideal and seeking ever to be and to do the best he can discern, is in due time "re-born"—that is, reconstituted—of these parents, and becomes "Christ-Jesus," a son at once of God and Man, and a personal demonstration of the truth that "there are three that bear record in heaven" of the microcosm, no less than of the macrocosm, and that "these three are one." For the heaven now in question is the "kingdom within" of his own perfected nature, and he himself is the One, at once, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," and the Spirit, the Water and the Blood, for all these are mystical terms to denote

the constituents of the regenerated selfhood, the "Son of Man," who is by virtue of his nature always "in heaven," even though he be also incarnate on earth.

True, the process of such regeneration is a long one, but not in comparison with the greatness and duration of the destiny for which it is a prelude and preparation. And the Christian Theosophy, now happily recovered ⁽²⁾ from the oblivion to which for ages it has been condemned, accords to man—no less than does its fellow system of the East—ample space and opportunity for its accomplishment. For it endows him with an ego capable of persisting through all changes of form and state—thereby supplementing and complementing the doctrine of evolution, from unscientific making it scientific—and it assigns to him as many returns to the nursery and school of the body as may be necessary for his soul's growth and education, till he attain his spiritual majority, and is fitted for higher destinies. And to this new individuality, thus divinely engendered, and perfected through experience, it accords perpetuity of being. For though he be in the condition of God, and is God, the individual is not merged and lost in the universal, but remains ever an individuation of the universal. For, while all become one as to Spirit, the One becomes many as to Souls, each of whom is a vehicle for God. And together they constitute that Church Invisible, which is the mystical body of Christ. For God, under individuation, is "Christ."

Such, according to that "divine science," chief of the treasures of which Israel, fleeing, "spoiled the Egyptians," that Gnosis whose key the doctors of the temple have in all ages taken away, neither using it themselves nor suffering others to use it,—such, to use the expression of Egypt's great hierophant, Hermes Trismegistus, is "the most perfect glory of the soul."

Thus much in refutation of the charge of forgery and chicanery brought against the Bible on the score of the alleged interpolation. Yet hasty and unfounded as that charge is, it is not more so than the other charges which abound in the agnostic writings of the day, one

(2) See note, p. 56.

and all of which come of following the lead of the orthodoxists in rejecting the Bible's own account of itself, and interpreting it from a standpoint other than that from which it claims to be written, and by rules other than those which itself prescribes. For judged from its own declared standpoint and by its own declared canons of interpretation, so far as the organon of understanding employed is adequate to the task, the Bible discloses itself indisputably as, first and foremost, if not exclusively, an exposition of Principles eternal and inherent in the nature of Being, and of their formulation, manifestation, and individuation as the object of existence and the function of evolution.

EDWARD MAITLAND.

*The following is an Extract from a Letter, entitled
"The Church and the Bible," written by Edward
Maitland, and published in the A.J. of the
29th December, 1894, and the 5th January, 1895,
S.H.H.*

No one can read the Bible with a particle of intelligence without perceiving that it is from beginning to end a denunciation both of the order to which the accepted orthodoxy is due, and of that orthodoxy itself. This is the order of the priests. For it represents that order as in perpetual conflict with the order which it exalts as the ministers of God and the recipients and interpreters of divine revelation—the order, namely, of the prophets. It ascribes the fall of the Church from its Edenic and pure state to the priesthood acting under infernal instigation, charging them with corrupting the faculty whereby man has the knowledge of divine things—namely, the intuition—which, as the feminine mode of the mind, it calls the "woman," and with falsifying the truth by preferring the letter to the spirit, the form to the substance, the material symbol to the spiritual verity denoted by it—which practice it calls idolatry and the worship of false gods; and with setting up as the object of worship the blood-loving demon of the pit, and shedding in his honour innocent blood on the pure altars of the Lord. And it goes on to show that whenever the prophets arose to denounce the corruptions of the priests, and lead the people back to the pure and simple doctrine of the Church Unfallen, they were persecuted and slain by the priests, whose order was therefore denounced by the greatest of the prophets as the "Jerusalem that kills the prophets," and who was himself slain by them. For there is no greater

mistake than to suppose that the slayers of Jesus were the Jews. It is true they were Jews who gave him over to death, but it was not as Jews, but as priests, that they did so. The Jews, on the contrary, produced him and furnished him with his disciples and apostles, and would have taken him by force to make him their king, so greatly captivated were they by his simple doctrine of redemption by love and purity. But the priests killed him, as they had killed the prophets, his brethren, before him, and have ever since been killing him in the person of his doctrine, as declared in the Bible they would do until the end of that "evil and adulterous," because materialistic and idolatrous, "generation," which had been in possession ever since the Fall, and would be in possession until the redemption to be effected by his second and spiritual advent.

For, in calling itself Christian, sacerdotalism underwent no radical change. It but reconstituted its system around the name, on finding it a name to conjure with, preserving all its own worst and characteristic features. For it inherited its mysteries and Scriptures without the key to them, and to this day knows neither their source nor their signification. They, indeed, had come from above, and were divine; but the interpretation and application of them came from below, and were infernal. Hence, the force of the utterance of Jesus to the order which had thus perverted them, and would pervert them to the end, "Ye are of your father, the devil," and a "generation of vipers," in token of their being of the brood of the serpent-tempter of Eden; and such was the nonsense, and worse than nonsense, that they made of doctrines which in their spiritual and intended sense were absolutely reasonable and inextinguishable, that they suppressed the understanding as the criterion of truth, and the moral conscience as the criterion of right, in favour of authority, and this their own, falsifying to this end the meaning of the term "mystery." For while, in its proper sense, mystery means only that which, by reason of its belonging to a region of the consciousness transcending the sense-nature, requires for its apprehension the application of the mind to that superior region, in its

sacerdotal sense mystery meant that which transcends and even contradicts reason altogether, and yet must be believed on pain of hell-fire. And it was mystery as thus defined that in the book of Revelation, which is a forecast made by Jesus himself of the Church's future history, is denounced as "Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." For, in such sense, mystery involves the suppression of the understanding, and the Bible throughout insists on the understanding, making this the means and condition of salvation; since only when man understands the nature of existence can he obtain the knowledge and power to overcome the limitations of matter, and realise the divine potentialities belonging to him in virtue of the divinity of the constituent principles of existence, its force, and its substance, which potentialities it was the object of Jesus to demonstrate to men, he having realised them in himself.

It was in further defiance of the teaching of Christ that sacerdotalism suppressed the doctrine of regeneration in favour of substitution, and made salvation due to something done or suffered by someone from without, instead of to a change of interior condition. To which end it suppressed also its companion doctrine, without which regeneration is impossible—that of the multiplicity of earth-lives, now called reincarnation, which doctrine was universal in the pre-Christian Churches, and is implicit, and occasionally explicit, in the Bible. But regeneration makes every man his own priest, to work out his own salvation; and, therefore, it would not suit a sacerdotal order bent on making the world its own abject slaves; and substitution, by involving sacrifice, makes the priest necessary. Hence the orthodox doctrine of "vicarious-atonement."

Then, again, so far from being really Christian, the orthodoxy so-called is directly and palpably anti-Christian, according to the definition of that term given by John in his first Epistle. For in excluding, as it does, the feminine principle of Substance from its place in the Trinity of the Godhead, and making that Trinity masculine only, it "denies the Father and the Son" by denying the Mother, without whom is neither Father-

hood nor Sonship. Doing which it renders impossible that eternal generation whereby are both creation and redemption, the latter of which is by regeneration, and deprives man of the Divine potentialities belonging to him in virtue of the divinity of the substance of existence. The Bible, on the contrary, attaches such importance to the doctrine of the divinity of the substance of existence that in its opening sentences it twice affirms the fact, declaring that "in the beginning, God," the Unity, "created," or put forth from himself, the Duality, "the heavens," spirit and deep or force and substance, and their ultimate phenomenal resultant generated of them, "the earth," or matter. "And the Spirit," or force, of God "moved upon the face of the waters," or Substance, of God; "and God said"—that is, found expression—"and there was light," or manifestation of God.

The same process is represented as repeated in the individual when God finds manifestation in man. For the nativity of the Christ in man corresponds to that of the universe, the Spirit or Force of God being called "Holy Ghost," and the Soul or Substance of God being called "Virgin Maria," of whom are generated within man the spiritual and substantial selfhood called "Christ." Wherefore, the true trinity of the Bible and Christianity, and of reason, consists of "the Spirit, the Water, and the Word," as respectively, Father, Mother, and Child—Force, Substance, and Phenomenon, according to the plane of activity. And all things are made of the Divine Substance. For there is no other, seeing that God is the only reality. Nevertheless, so enamoured is the orthodoxy called Christian, and claiming to rest on the Bible, of the notion that the universe is made out of nothing, and has no inherent divinity, that it has gone out of its way to introduce into its marriage service the lying sentence, "O God, who didst create—or, as in the Anglican, hast made—all things out of nothing;" thus completely ignoring the Divine Substance, which the Bible makes the substance of all things, calling it the "Water," or "*Maria*."

This persistent denial by sacerdotalism to man of

his divine potentialities, and the terrible consequences to him of his ignorance of the fact, made the time of the end of a system so pernicious a subject of the most eager anticipation by the prophets. There was, as they knew, but one way in which that event could be accomplished, namely, through the revolt of the human mind against sacerdotal control, which would come of man's recovery of his faculty of understanding in respect of divine things. But so mighty was the glamour of "the devil and his angels"—the corrupt priesthoods of religion and science—that it was not until after the lapse of long ages that such event could come about. The times and seasons of the human soul, like those of the vegetable world, are subject to various influences, and only when all the conditions are favourable do the budding and blossoming and fruiting take place. There is a world wherein the periods of such cycles are known, as the gardener knows those of his plants; and that world is the world celestial, whose denizens are men who, having accomplished their warfare with matter, and become wholly spiritual and substantial, have realised the divine potentialities which are the birthright of every man. And in such measure as men have done this while in the body and on earth, that world celestial is accessible by them, and its knowledges are at their service. They to whom those knowledges are imparted for the world's benefit are prophets. And the faculty in virtue of which they are prophets is the mystic "woman" of Holy Writ, the Intuition. And it is because intuition is itself the product of experience, being inborn experience, that which the soul knows of old and of former lives, that they are able to recognise the truth of the knowledges thus imparted to them. It may, moreover, even be that they already know so much that it needs but the illuminating ray of the spirit to lighten up the chambers of their souls to enable them to behold that which is there treasured up.

Scripture makes no secret of the time of the end of the system it so bitterly denounces, or of the manner thereof. Said Jesus: "When ye shall see then is the end near." And that it implied a restoration of

faculty was further declared by him in the prophecy of the budding anew of the fig-tree. For the fig has been from time immemorial the mystic symbol of the inward understanding; and therefore it was the condemnation of the fallen Church for the loss of this faculty that was implied in the parable of the cursing of the barren fig-tree, and it was the end of that dark period in the Church which was implied in the prophecy of its budding anew. The precise period had already been intimated by Daniel, as also in other parts of the Bible. And there are yet other prophecies, products of the intervening ages, based on various cycles

some spiritual, some astronomical—pointing to the same epoch. And that epoch is our own; the moment being that wherein the fall had culminated to its lowest depth by the utter loss of the spiritual consciousness through the suppression by science of the “**woman**” Intuition, and the acquiescence therein by the Church. This was the moment waited for. The Sun of the Soul had declined to its lowest point, and its re-birth was imminent if man were not to perish utterly. And accordingly she has now been exalted, clothed with the sun, and carried to the throne of God; and her sons are making war with the dragon and getting the victory over him. God’s two witnesses in man—the intellect and the intuition combined in a pure spirit, the condition on which the Shiloh, his deliverer, comes to him—have risen from the dead, and ascended into the heaven of their proper supremacy. The angel flying in mid-heaven has proclaimed his eternal gospel to the world, restoring the perfect doctrine and rule of life of the Church Unfallen, making a perfect eirenicon at once between the Churches and between religion and science, by restoring the understanding as the criterion of truth and basis of faith, to the utter deposition of authority, and therein of mystery, as sacerdotally defined. And superstition, religious and scientific, is already flying before its light, like Python, the mighty serpent of darkness, before the rays of Phoibos, to make its dwelling in the caverns and secret places of earth. For Materialism is utterly played out in both its strongholds—the sacer-

dotal and the scientific—by the restoration of the long-lost key of knowledge, and the consequent solution of all problems in favour of spirit as the source and substance of existence. And on all sides—from the cultured and percipient, cleric and lay, irrespective of Church, creed, and race, whom the glad tidings have reached—arises the cry of joy and thankfulness: “At last! at last! our mysteries are solved for us, and we have a scientific statement of them, so potent of logic and so luminous of exposition, that not even that wicked one himself, the son of perdition and mystery of iniquity, who so long has sat in the temple of God, accepted of the priests as if he were God, can withstand it. The balance is restored, the loss of which caused the fall, and with it the divine Gnosis itself, the doctrine of the Church Unfallen. And man is once more whole, sound and sane, and able to perfect the system of his thought, as well, also, as himself. No longer, then, shall the promise of the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven be a meaningless sound in men’s ears; but ‘mercy and truth’—religion and science—are met together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.”

Such is the era on which the world has now actually entered, through the fulfilment of the prophecies, in their every particular—time, place, manner, and conditions—which announced a New Gospel of Interpretation to take place at this epoch in supplement and complement of the former Gospel of Manifestation, to the recognition of the whole humanity of the man and of the woman conjoined and equilibrated. For, as manifestation is of the man, so is interpretation of the woman, neither of whom is without the other in the perfect humanity, on any plane of man’s nature, physical, mental, moral, or spiritual. It is by the light of that interpretation that I have been enabled to make those corrections of the doctrine of the fallen Church which have appeared in these pages, and to demonstrate the utter fallacy of the Materialistic philosophy by convicting its adherents of working with a faculty mutilate and unsound, the “man” (intellect) without the “woman” (intuition)—a divorce as fatal to man’s

mental system as would be a divorce between the modes centrifugal and centripetal of force to the solar system, or between the modes masculine and feminine of sex to the reproductive system.

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Among the fallacies to be discarded is the fallacy which consists in believing that the Church, so vehemently denounced in its own sacred books for its manifold, grievous, and fatal perversions of the truth contained in those books, and so ignorant as to be unaware either of the source or of the meaning of its own dogmas, must understand its doctrines better than I understand them, whose high privilege it is to have been one of the two recipients of the New Gospel of Interpretation, which has been vouchsafed expressly to correct those perversions, and who not only have that gospel by heart, but who know absolutely by my own soul's experience—as also did my colleague—the truth of every word of it. For the method of the revelation in question was the simple one of recarnating two souls which, in virtue of their previous earth-lives, were possessed of all the requisite knowledges, and enabling them, under divine illumination, to recover the recollections of those knowledges, to the positive demonstration of the pre-existence and immortality of the soul, as proved by its power thus to recover its memories of the far past, and of the truth of the definition of intuition as “in-born experience, that which the soul knoweth of old and of former years,” and of illumination as “the light of Wisdom, whereby a man perceiveth heavenly secrets, which light is the spirit of God within the man shewing unto him the things of God.”

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EDWARD MAITLAND.



